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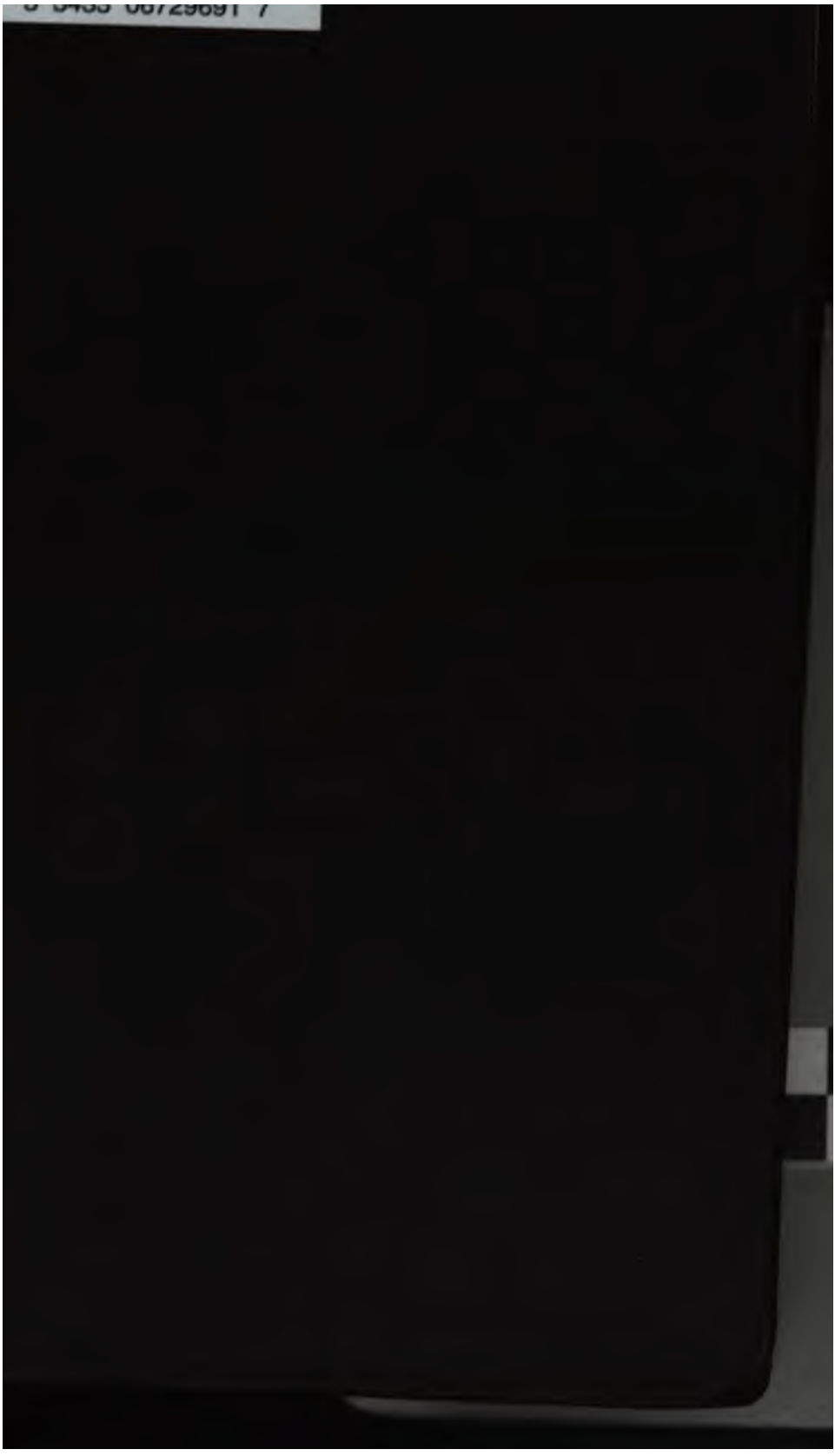

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from his friend Miss Clark
June 21st 1818
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THE

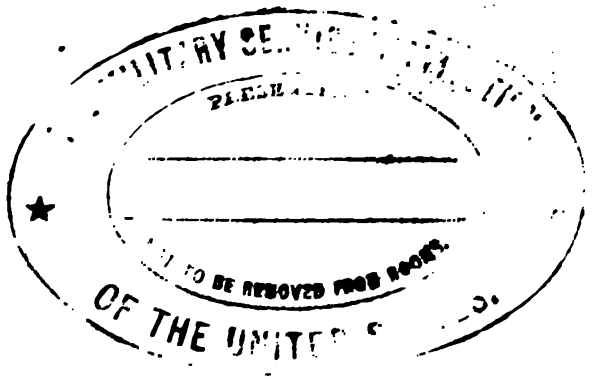
WORKS

OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, KNIGHT;

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.



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Sir Joshua Reynolds Pinxt

Caroline Watson Engrav
to her Majesty sculpsit

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dum demum sanæ mentis oculus oculo cernere
incipet ubi corporis oculus incipit hebescere.

Senec

THE

WORKS

OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, KNIGHT;

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

CONTAINING

HIS DISCOURSES, IDLERS,

A JOURNEY TO FLANDERS AND HOLLAND,

AND HIS COMMENTARY ON DU FRESNOY'S ART OF PAINTING;

PRINTED FROM HIS REVISED COPIES,

(WITH HIS LAST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS)

IN THREE VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR,

BY EDMOND MALONE, ESQ.

ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

THE FOURTH EDITION CORRECTED.

—QUASI NON EA PERCIPIAM ALIIS, QUE MIHI IPSI DICUNT. CICERO.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND,

By C. and R. Baldwin, New Bridge-street.

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TO

THE KING.

THE regular progress of cultivated life is from necessaries to accommodations, from accommodations to ornaments. By your illustrious predecessors were established Marts *for manufactures*; and Colleges for science; but for the arts of elegance, those arts by which manufactures are embellished, and science is refined, to found an Academy was reserved for Your Majesty.

Had such patronage been without effect, there had been reason to believe that Nature had, by some insurmountable impediment, obstructed our proficiency; but the annual improvement of the Exhibitions which Your

Majesty has been pleased to encourage, shows that only encouragement had been wanting.

To give advice to those who are contending for royal liberality, has been for some years the duty of my station in the Academy; and these Discourses hope for Your Majesty's acceptance, as well-intended endeavours to incite that emulation which your notice has kindled, and direct those studies which your bounty has rewarded.

May it please Your MAJESTY,

Your MAJESTY'S

Most dutiful servant,

and most faithful subject,

[1778.] JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

SOME ACCOUNT OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

THE Author of the following admirabl works, having, for near half a century, been well known to ~~almost every~~ person in this country who had any pretensions to taste or literature, to the present age an account of him, however brief, may seem wholly unnecessary; nor should the reader be detained, even for a few minutes, from the pleasure which awaits him, but that Posterity, while they contemplate with delight and admiration those productions of his pencil which place him on a level with Titian and Vandyck, will naturally wish to know something of the *man*, as well as of the *painter*.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS was born at Plympton in Devonshire, July 16th, 1723; the son of Samuel Reynolds and Theophila Potter. He was on every side connected with the Church, for both his father and grandfather were in holy orders; his mother was the daughter of a clergyman, and his maternal grandmother the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Baker, an eminent mathematician in the last century, of whom we have an account in the BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA. His father's elder brother, John, was also a clergyman, a fellow of Eton College, and Canon of St. Peter's, Exeter.[1]

Mr. Samuel Reynolds taught the grammar-school of Plympton, which could have

[1] This gentleman, who died in 1758, left his library, and the greater part of his fortune, to Exeter College in Oxford.—There is a mezzotinto print of him, scraped by M' Ardell, (from a portrait painted by his nephew, now in Eton College,) which has erroneously been supposed to represent the father of the painter. See Bromley's Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits, 4to. 1792, p. 280.

afforded him but a moderate subsistence; nor was he enabled by any ecclesiastical preferment to provide for his numerous family, amounting to eleven children in all, of whom Joshua was the seventh. Five, however, of these children died in their infancy.—His father had a notion,[a] that it might at some future period of life be an advantage to a child to bear an uncommon christian name; which might recommend him to the attention and kindness of some person bearing the same name, who, if he should happen to have no natural object of his care, might be led even by so slight a circumstance to become a benefactor. Hence our author derived the scriptural name of Joshua, which though not very uncommon, occurs less frequently than many others: of this baptismal name, however, the Register of Plympton by some negligence or inaccuracy has deprived him.'

[a] From Dr. Percy, Lord Bishop of Dromore.

[b] In the Register of Plympton, by which it appears that

Under the tuition of Mr. Reynolds he was for some time instructed in the classicks; but at an early age his inclination for that art of which he afterwards became so illustrious a professor, began to display itself; and his imperfect attempts[4] at delineation were encouraged by his father, who was himself fond of drawings, and had a small collection of anatomical and other prints. The young artist's first essays were made in copying several little things done by two of his elder sisters, who had likewise a turn for

he was baptized on the 30th of July, he is styled "*Joseph* son of Samuel Reynolds, Clerk:" probably in consequence of the entry not being made at the time of the baptism. The name, I suppose, was written originally on a slip of paper in an abbreviated form—"*Jos.* son of Samuel Reynolds,"—and was at a subsequent period entered erroneously by the clergyman or clerk of the parish.

[4] Lady Inchiquin has one of these very early essays; a perspective view of a book-case, under which his father has written—"Done by Joshua out of pure idleness." It is on the back of a Latin exercise. Joshua's idleness was, his preferring the employment of his pencil to that of the pen.

the art; and he afterwards (as he himself informed me) eagerly copied such prints as he met with among his father's books, particularly those which were given in the translation of Plutarch's Lives, published by Dryden. But his principal fund of imitation was Jacob Cats' book of Emblems, which his great grandmother by the father's side, a Dutch woman, had brought with her from Holland.—When he was but eight years old, he read with great avidity and pleasure THE JESUIT'S PERSPECTIVE, a book which happened to lie on the window-seat of his father's parlour; and made himself so completely master of it, that he never afterwards had occasion to study any other treatise on that subject.[s] He then attempted to draw the School at Plympton, a building elevated on stone pillars; and he did it so well, that his father said, "Now this exemplifies what the author of the 'Perspective' asserts in his Preface,—that, by observing

[s] From himself in 1786.

the rules laid down in his book, a man may do wonders; for this is wonderful."[6] From these attempts he proceeded to draw likenesses of the friends and relations of his family, with tolerable success. But what most strongly confirmed him in his love of the art, was Richardson's Treatise on Painting; the perusal of which so delighted and inflamed his mind, that Raffaelle appeared to him superior to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern time; a notion which he loved to indulge all the rest of his life.

His propensity to this fascinating art, growing daily more manifest, his father thought fit to gratify his inclination; and when he was not much more than seventeen years of age, on St. Luke's day, Oct. the 18th, 1740, he was placed as a pupil under his countryman Mr. Hudson,[7] who though

[6] From the late James Boswell, Esq. to whom this little circumstance was communicated by our author.

[7] Thomas Hudson; who was the scholar and son-in-law

but an ordinary painter, was the most distinguished artist of that time. After spending a few years in London, which he employed in acquiring the rudiments of his art, on a disagreement with his master about a very slight matter, he in 1743, removed to Devonshire, where, as he told me, he passed about three years in company from whom little improvement could be got: when he recol-

of Richardson the Painter, was born in 1701. "He enjoyed" (says Lord Orford, ANECDOTES OF PAINTING, iv. 122, 8vo.) "for many years the chief business of portrait-painting in the capital, after the favourite artists, his master and Jervas, were gone off the stage; though Vanloo first, and Liotard afterwards, for a few years diverted the torrent of fashion from the established professor. Still the country gentlemen were faithful to their compatriot, and were content with his honest similitudes, and with the fair tied wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which he bestowed liberally on his customers, and which, with complacency, they beheld multiplied in Faber's mezzotintos. The better taste introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds, put an end to Hudson's reign, who had the good sense to resign the throne soon after finishing his capital work, the family-piece of Charles, Duke of Ma[illegible]." [About 1756.] He died, Jan.

lected this period of his life, he always spoke of it as so much time thrown away, (so far as related to a knowledge of the world and of mankind,) of which he ever afterwards lamented the loss. However, after some little dissipation, he sat down seriously to the study and practice of his art; and he always considered the disagreement which induced him to leave Mr. Hudson as a very fortunate circumstance, since by this means he was led to deviate from the tameness and insipidity of his master, and to form a manner of his own.

While in this career, the first of his performances which brought him into any considerable notice, was the portrait of Captain Hamilton, father of the present Marquis of Abercorn, which he painted so early as in the year 1746.[8] When at a late period of

[8] It is now in the possession of the Marquis of Abercorn; and there is a portrait of the same gentleman with his children around him, a small family-piece, painted

his life he saw this portrait, he was surprised to find it so well done; and comparing it with his later works, with that modesty which always accompanies genius, lamented that in such a series of years he should not have made a greater progress in his art.[9]

On Christmas-day, 1746, his father, a man highly respected in his native county, died; and left our young painter to raise, as he could, the fabric of his own fortune. After spending a few more years in the practice of painting, partly in London [10] and partly in Devonshire, where many of his early essays yet remain, he became acquainted with

by young Reynolds about the same time, in the Collection of Lord Eliot, at Port Eliot in Cornwall.

[9] He made the same observation on viewing the picture of a Boy reading, which he also painted in 1746; an admirable piece, which was sold by auction among other of his works in 1796, to Sir Henry Englefield, Bart. for thirty-five guineas.

[10] At this period he lived in St. Martin's Lane, which was then a favourite residence of Artists; nearly opposite to May's Buildings.

George, the third Lord Edgcumbe and Captain (afterwards Lord) Keppel, by each of whom he was warmly patronised; and the latter being appointed to the command of a small squadron on the Mediterranean station, Mr. Reynolds embraced the opportunity which his kindness offered, and accompanied him thither, sailing from Plymouth, May 11th, 1749. In the course of their voyage (during which he had accommodations in the captain's own ship,) they touched at Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Algiers, and Minorca; and after spending about two months in Portmahon, the principal town of that island, in December he sailed to Leghorn, from which place he proceeded to Rome.

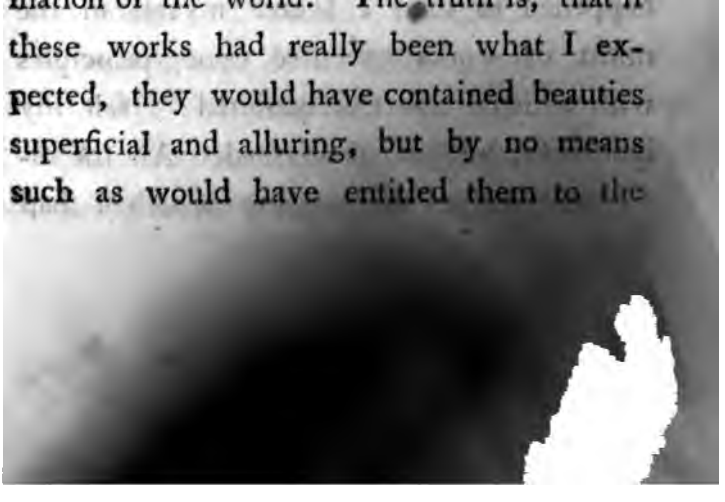
Among our author's loose papers, I have found some detached and unconnected thoughts, written occasionally as hints for a Discourse on a new and singular plan, which he appears, at a late period of his life,

to have had it in contemplation to compose and deliver to the Academy, and which he seems to have intended as a history of his mind, so far as concerned his art, and of his progress, studies, and practice; together with a view of the advantages which he had enjoyed, and the disadvantages he had laboured under, in the course that he had run: a scheme from which, however liable it might be to the ridicule of Wits and Scoffers, (a circumstance of which, he says, he was perfectly aware,) he conceived the Students *might* derive some useful documents for the regulation of their own conduct and practice. It is much to be regretted that he did not live to compose such a Discourse; for, from the hand of so great and candid an Artist, it could not but have been highly curious and instructive. One of these fragments relating to his feelings when he first went to Italy, every reader will, I am confident, be pleased with its insertion.

"It has frequently happened, (says this great painter) as I was informed by the keeper of the Vatican, that many of those whom he had conducted through the various apartments of that edifice, when about to be dismissed, have asked for the works of Raffaelle, and would not believe that they had already passed through the rooms where they are preserved; so little impression had those performances made on them. One of the first painters now in France once told me, that this circumstance happened to himself; though he now looks on Raffaelle with that veneration which he deserves from all painters and lovers of the art. I remember very well my own disappointment, when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother-student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raffaelle had the same effect on him, or rather that they did not produce the effect which he expected. This

was a great relief to my mind; and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who from natural imbecility appeared to be incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them.—In justice to myself, however, I must add, that though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raffaelle, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that ever happened to me; I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted: I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of painting which I had

brought with me from England, where the art was in the lowest state it had ever been in, (it could not indeed be lower,) were to be totally done away, and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become as *a little child.*—Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit, and to admire them, more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me; and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. The truth is, that if these works had really been what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to the



great reputation which they have so long and so justly obtained.

"Having since that period frequently revolved this subject in my mind, I am now clearly of opinion, that a relish for the higher excellencies of art is an acquired taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation, and great labour and attention. On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness; as if it were to be expected that our minds, like tinder, should instantly catch fire from the divine spark of Raffaelle's genius. I flatter myself that now it would be so, and that I have a just and lively perception of his great powers: but let it be always remembered, that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep; and at the first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style, which strikes at once, and captivates the [illegible] for a time, without

ever satisfying the judgement. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts. A just poetical taste, and the acquisition of a nice discriminative musical ear, are equally the work of time. Even the eye, however perfect in itself, is often unable to distinguish between the brilliancy of two diamonds; though the experienced jeweller will be amazed at its blindness; not considering that there was a time when he himself could not have been able to pronounce which of the two was the most perfect, and that his own power of discrimination was acquired by slow and imperceptible degrees.

"The man of true genius, instead of spending all his hours, as many artists do while they are at Rome, in measuring statues and copying pictures, soon begins to think for himself, and endeavours to do something like what he sees.—I consider general copying (he adds) as a delusive kind of industry:

the student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object: as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work, and those powers of invention and disposition which ought particularly to be called out and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise. How incapable of producing any thing of their own, those are, who have spent most of their time in making finished copies, is an observation well known to all who are conversant with our art." [11] We may be assured, therefore, that this great painter did not fall into the errour here pointed out;—did not long continue the practice of copying the great works [12] which were at this period

[11] This observation occurs nearly in the same words in the first Discourse.

[12] Of the few copies which he made while he was at Rome, two are now in the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin, who married his [illegible], Miss Palmer; St. Mi-

within his reach; but rather employed his time in examining and fixing in his mind their peculiar and characteristick excellencies. Instead of copying the touches of the great masters, he aspired to copy their conceptions. "From contemplating the works of Titian, Correggio, &c. (says he in another of his fragments,) we derive this great advantage; we learn that certain niceties of expression are capable of being executed, which otherwise we might consider as beyond the reach of art; this inspires us with some degree of confidence, and we are thus incited to endeavour at other excellencies in the same line."

Some account of his particular practice and habits of study, while he was in Italy, is, I know, much desired by several Artists of the present day; but these I have no means of

chael, the Archangel, slaying the Dragon, after Guido; and the School of Athens, from Raffaelle's both masterly performances.

investigating. The method which he followed when he was at Venice, in order to ascertain the principles on which the great masters of colouring wrought, and to attain the true management of light and shade, he has himself particularly mentioned in a note on Du Fresnoy's Poem.[13]

While he was in Italy, he occasionally indulged himself in Caricatura, which was much in vogue at that time. Of pieces of this description, the only one which I have seen of his hand, is a large picture,[14] containing about twenty figures, being all the English gentlemen of note who were then at Rome. This caricatura, however, was not like the more modern productions in that style, being done with the consent of the gentlemen represented. It was a kind of picturesque travesty of Raffaelle's SCHOOL OF ATHENS.

[13] Vol. III. p. 147.

[14] In the collection of Joseph Henry, Esq. of Straffan in the county of Kildare, in Ireland.

After an absence of near three years, he began to think of returning home; and a slight circumstance which he used to mention, may serve to show, that however great may have been the delight which he derived from residence in a country that Raffaelle and Michael Angelo had embellished by their genius and their works, the prospect of revisiting his native land was not unpleasing. When he was at Venice, in compliment to the English gentlemen then residing there, the manager of the opera one night ordered the band to play an English ballad-tune. Happening to be the popular air which was played or sung in almost every street, just at the time of their leaving London, by suggesting to them that metropolis with all its connexions and endearing circumstances, it immediately brought tears into our author's eyes, as well as into those of his countrymen who were present.

On his arrival in London in 1752,[15] he very soon attracted the publick notice; and

not long afterwards the whole-length portrait which he painted of his friend and patron, Admiral Keppel, exhibited such powers, that he was not only universally acknowledged to be at the head of his profession, but to be the greatest painter that England had seen since Vandyck. The whole interval between the time of Charles the First, and the conclusion of the reign of George the Second, though distinguished by the performances of Lely, Riley, and Kneller, seemed to be annihilated; and the only question was, whether the new painter, or Vandyck, were the more excellent. For several years before the period we are now speaking of, the painters of portraits contented themselves with exhibiting as correct a resemblance as they could; but seem not to have thought, or had not the power, of enlivening the canvas by giving a

[15] On his return from Italy he hired a large house in Newport-street, now divided into two houses. Here he continued to dwell till the year 1761, when he removed to Leicester-Fields.

kind of historick air to their pictures. Mr. Reynolds very soon saw how much animation might be obtained by deviating from the insipid manner of his immediate predecessors;[16] hence in many of his portraits, particularly when combined in family-groups, we find much of the variety and spirit of a higher species of art. Instead of confining himself to mere likeness, in which however he was eminently happy, he dived, as it were, into the minds, and habits, and manners, of those who sat to him;[17] and accordingly the majority of his portraits are so

[16] Dahl, Richardson, Jervas, Thornhill, Hudson, Slaughter, &c.

[17] The various portraits of Mr. Garrick, those of Dr. Johnson, Dr. Robinson Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Camden, Dr Goldsmith, Mr. Burke, Mr. Mason, Mr. Foote, Mr. Sterne, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Gibbon, Dr. Markham Archbishop of York, Lord Mansfield, Lord Thurlow, Lord Heathfield, the execrable Duke of Orleans, Lord Richard Cavendish, Mr. Andrew Stewart, Mr. Pott, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Cholmondeley, are eminent instances of the truth of this observation.

appropriated and characteristick, that the many illustrious persons whom he has delineated, will be almost as well known to posterity, as if they had seen and conversed with them.

Very soon after his return from Italy, his acquaintance with Dr. Johnson commenced; and their intimacy continued uninterrupted to the time of Johnson's death. Happening to meet with the Life of Savage in Devonshire, which, though published some years before, was then new to him, he began to read it (as Mr. Boswell has informed us) "while he was standing with his arm leaning against a chimney-piece. It seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed."[18] Being then unacquainted with the author, he must naturally have had a strong desire to see and converse

[18] Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, i. 144.

with that extraordinary man; and, as the same writer relates, he about this time was introduced to him. "When Johnson lived in Castle-Street, Cavendish-Square, he used frequently to visit two ladies who lived opposite to him; [Mr. Reynolds;][19] Miss Cetterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell, Reynolds used also to visit there, and thus they met. Mr. Reynolds, as I have observed above, had, from the first reading of his Life of Savage, conceived a very high admiration of Johnson's powers of writing. His conversation no less delighted him, and he cultivated his acquaintance with the laudable zeal of one who was ambitious of general improvement. Sir Joshua indeed was lucky enough at their very first meeting to make a remark, which was so much above the common-place style of conversation, that Johnson at once perceived that Reynolds had the habit of thinking for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to

[19] In Newport-street.

whom they owed great obligations; upon which Reynolds observed,—"You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from the burden of gratitude." They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion, as too selfish; but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the *mind*, the fair view of human nature, which it exhibited, like some of the Reflections of Rochefoucault. The consequence was, that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him.

"Sir Joshua told me a pleasant characteristical anecdote of Johnson, about the time of their first acquaintance. When they were one evening together at the Miss Cotterells," the then Duchess of Argyle and another lady of high rank, came in. Johnson, thinking that the Miss Cotterells were too much engrossed by them, and that he and his friend were neglected, as low company of whom they were somewhat ashamed,

grew angry; and resolving to shock their supposed pride, by making their great visitors imagine they were low indeed, he addressed himself in a loud tone to Mr. Reynolds, saying, 'How much do you think you and I could get in a week, if we were *to work as hard as we could?*' as if they had been common mechanics."[20]

How much he profitted by his acquaintance with this excellent and extraordinary man, he intended to have particularly mentioned in the Discourse which, as I have already observed, he had it in contemplation to compose. "I remember, (says he,) Mr. Burke, speaking of the Essays of Sir Francis Bacon, said, he thought them the best of his works. Dr. Johnson was of opinion, 'that

[20] Life of Johnson, i. 217. Johnson, however continued to live in intimacy with these ladies, whom he frequently mentions in his letters to Baretti. In that dated Dec. 11, 1762, he says, "Miss Cotterell is still with Mrs. Porter: Miss Charlotte is married to Dean Lewis, and has three children." ibid. p. 341. The elder of these ladies visited him not long before his death.

their excellence and their value consisted in being the observations of a strong mind operating upon life; and in consequence you find there what you seldom find in other books.'—It is this kind of excellence which gives a value to the performances of artists also. It is the thoughts expressed in the works of Michael Angelo, Correggio, Raffaelle, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothick masters, and not the inventions of Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Maratti, Luca Giordano, and others that I might mention, which we seek after with avidity. From the former we learn to think originally. May I presume to introduce myself on this occasion, and even to mention as an instance of the truth of what I have remarked, the very Discourses which I have had the honour of delivering from this place. Whatever merit they have, must be imputed, in a great measure, to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would

be to the credit of these Discourses, if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the faculty of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking. Perhaps other men might have equal knowledge; but few were so communicative. His great pleasure was to talk to those who looked up to him. It was here he exhibited his wonderful powers. In mixed company, and frequently in company that *ought* to have looked up to him, many, thinking they had a character for learning to support, considered it as beneath them to enlist in the train of his auditors; and to such persons he certainly did not appear to advantage, being often impetuous and overbearing. The desire of shining in conversation was in him indeed a predominant passion; and if it must be attributed to vanity, let it at the same time be recollected, that it produced that loquaciousness from which his more intimate

friends derived considerable advantage. The observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on every thing about us, I applied to our art; with what success others must judge. Perhaps an artist in his studies should pursue the same conduct; and instead of patching up a particular work on the narrow plan of imitation, rather endeavour to acquire the art and power of thinking. On this subject I have often spoken; but it cannot be too often repeated, that the general power of composition may be acquired; and when acquired, the artist may then lawfully take hints from his predecessors. In reality indeed it appears to me, that a man must begin by the study of others. Thus Bacon became a great thinker by first entering into and making himself master of the thoughts of other men."

In consequence of his connexion with Dr. Johnson, he in 1759 furnished that writer with three Essays on the subject of

painting, which appeared in the IDLER, and were, I believe, our author's first literary performance.

But though he derived great advantage and instruction from this very distinguished writer, with whom he lived in uninterrupted intimacy for thirty years, Johnson was not his original preceptor in the art of thinking; as has been suggested to me by our common friend, the late ever-to-be-lamented Mr. Burke; whose death, which happened a few months after the first edition of these works, would at any time have been a grievous loss to his country, but at the present distressful and momentous period is an irreparable calamity to the whole civilized world.—"I find," (said this sagacious and profound observer, whose approbation and whose remarks are so interwoven, that I cannot avail myself of the latter without the former,) "I find but one thing material which you have omitted

in the life of our inestimable friend. You state very properly how much he owed to the writings and conversation of Johnson; and nothing shows more the greatness of Sir Joshua's parts, than his taking advantage of both, and making some application of them to his profession, when Johnson neither understood, nor desired to understand, any thing of painting, and had no distinct idea of its nomenclature, even in those parts which had got most into use in common life. But though Johnson had done much to enlarge and strengthen his habit of thinking, Sir Joshua did not owe his first rudiments of speculation to him. He has always told me, that he owed his firſt disposition to generalize, and to view things in the abstract, to old Mr. Mudge, Prebendary of Exeter, and brother to the celebrated mechanick of that name. I have myself seen Mr. Mudge the clergyman, at Sir Joshua's house. He was a learned and vene-

rable old man; and as I thought, very much conversant in the Platonic Philosophy, and very fond of that method of philosophizing. He had been originally a dissenting minister; a description which at that time bred very considerable men, both among those who adhered to it, and those who left it. He had entirely cured himself of the unpleasant narrowness which in the early part of his life had distinguished those gentlemen, and was perfectly free from the ten times more dangerous enlargement which has been since then their general characteristick. Sir Joshua Reynolds had always a great love for the whole of that family, and took a great interest in whatever related to them. His acquaintance with the Mudges ought to be reckoned among the earliest of his literary connections. It was from him that I first got a view of the few that have been published of Mr. Mudge's Sermons; and on conversing afterwards with Mr. Mudge, I found great traces of Sir Joshua Reynolds in

him, and, if I may say so, much of the manner of the master." [22]

[22] Letter from the Right Hon. Edmund Burke to the Editor, dated Bath, May 4, 1797.

Our author's early friend and instructor died April 3, 1769, and his memory was honoured by the following characteristick encomium, written by Dr. Johnson, and inserted May 2, (under the article of DEATHS,) in the LONDON CHRONICLE.

"The Reverend Mr. Zachariah Mudge, Prebendary of Exeter, and Vicar of St. Andrew's in Plymouth; a man equally eminent for his virtues and abilities, and at once beloved as a companion, and reverenced as a pastor. He had that general curiosity to which no kind of knowledge is *indifferent or superfluous*, and that general benevolence by which no order of men is hated or despised.

"His principles both of thought and action were great and comprehensive. By a solicitous examination of objections, and judicious comparison of opposite arguments, he attained what enquiry never gives but to industry and perspicuity, a firm and unshaken settlement of conviction. But his firmness was without asperity; for, knowing with how much difficulty truth was sometimes found, he did not wonder that many missed it.

"The general course of his life was determined by his profession; he studied the sacred volumes in the original languages; with what diligence and success, his Notes upon the Psalms give sufficient evidence. He

To mark the gradual progress of our illustrious painter's reputation from year to year, is not the object of the present memoir; but the

once endeavoured to add the knowledge of Arabick to that of Hebrew; but finding his thoughts too much diverted from other studies, after some time desisted from his purpose.

" His discharge of parochial duties was exemplary. How his sermons were composed, may be learned from the excellent volume which he has given to the publick; but how they were delivered, can be known only to those that heard them; for as he appeared in the pulpit, words will not easily describe him. His delivery, though unconstrained, was not negligent, and though forcible, was not turbulent; disdaining anxious nicety of emphasis, and laboured artifice of action, it captivated the hearer by its natural dignity, it roused the sluggish and fixed the volatile, and detained the mind upon the subject, without directing it to the speaker.

" The grandeur and solemnity of the preacher did not intrude upon his general behaviour; at the table of his friends he was a companion communicative and attentive, of unaffected manners only cheerfulness, willing to please easy to be pleased. His acquaintance was universally sought, his presence obstructed no enjoyment forbid. Though studious, he was accessible, he was candid; though highly and in 1739.

era of the establishment of that Academy which gave rise to the following DISCOURSES, forming a memorable epoch in the history of the Arts, may justly claim particular notice.

The painters of great Britain from about the year 1750,[23] with a view of promoting their art by painting from living models, associated together in a kind of Academy in St. Martin's Lane, which they supported by annual subscription. Their efforts, however, were not very successful till ten years afterwards;[24] when, in imitation of foreign

[23] The first effort towards an Institution of this kind in the present century, was made in 1724, when Sir James Thornhill opened an Academy for Drawing at his house in Covent-garden. He had before proposed to Lord Halifax to obtain the foundation of a Royal Academy, to be built at the upper end of the Mews, with apartments for the Professors, &c. See Walpole's ANECDOTES OF PAINTING, iv. 45.

[24]
ir first Exhibition was in the year 1760. "The
ys Dr. Johnson in a letter to Joseph Baretti,
on, June 10, 1761,) have instituted a yearly
f pictures and statues, in imitation, as I am
eign Academies. This year was the *second*

Academies, they formed a scheme of an annual exhibition of their works, which, it was supposed, would be a probable means of attracting the publick attention. In this speculation they were not disappointed; and having thus secured a firmer footing, they afterwards (Jan. 26, 1765,) obtained a royal charter of incorporation.[25] Not long after their incorporation, however, the Artists who were not incorporated, conceiving some jealousy against this body, resolved no longer to submit to their regulations, and to undertake an Exhibition of their own: which was continued for a few years with no great success. To compose these jarring interests,

Exhibition. They please themselves much with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English School will rise in reputation." Boswell's Life of Johnson, i. 328.

[25] The principle artists from whom this scheme originated, were Mr. Moser, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Penny, Mr. Hayman, Mr. West. Mr. Sandby, Mr. Stubbs, and Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Chambers; whose ready access to his Majesty, in consequence of his official situation, facilitated and gave efficacy to his exertions.

and to give permanent dignity to a new establishment, his Majesty, in Dec. 1768,[25] was pleased to institute a ROYAL ACADEMY of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, composed of "the ablest and most respectable

[25] An Academy had been constituted under the royal patronage in 1767; but the plan was more confined, and the Institution was supported by an Annual Subscription. The new Royal Establishment instituted in 1768, which still subsists, was to be supported by the produce of an annual Exhibition; and the deficiency (if any) was to be supplied out of his Majesty's privy purse. For a few years the infant institution required the aid of his Majesty's bounty; who, at various times, was pleased to advance for its support above 5000l. The Exhibitions, however, becoming annually more profitable, in a short time were more than adequate to support the establishment; in consequence of which the Academy have now a considerable property in the Stocks, part of which they have lately appropriated to create a fund for decayed artists.—From 1769 to 1780 the Exhibitions produced, at an average, about 1500l. annually; from 1780 to 1796, about 2500l. The receipts in 1780, when the Academy exhibited their works for the first time at Somerset-place, amounted to more than 3000l. and those of 1796 exceeded the sum produced by the Exhibition of 1780; being the year of the greatest receipt from the first institution of the Academy.

Artists resident in great Britain ;"[a] and Mr. Reynolds, holding unquestionably the first rank in his profession, was nominated their President. Soon afterwards he received the honour of knighthood.

It was no part of the prescribed duty of his office to read lectures to the Academy; but our author voluntarily imposed this task upon himself, for the reasons which he has assigned in his fifteenth Discourse: "If prizes were to be given, it appeared not only proper, but almost indispensably necessary, that something should be said by the President on the delivery of those prizes; and the President for his own credit

[a] The two principal objects of this Institution, as stated by the Artists in a Petition to his Majesty, November 28, 1768, were, 1. "the establishment of a well-regulated SCHOOL or ACADEMY OF DESIGN, for the use of Students in the Arts; and 2. an ANNUAL EXHIBITION open to all Artists of distinguished merit, where they might offer their performances to publick inspection, and acquire that degree of reputation and encouragement which they should be deemed to deserve.

would wish to say something more than mere words of compliment; which, by being frequently repeated, would soon become flat and uninteresting, and by being uttered to many, would at last become a distinction to none: I thought, therefore, if I were to preface this compliment with some instructive observations on the art, when we crowned merit in the artists whom we rewarded, I might do something to animate and guide them in their future attempts." Such was the laudable motive which produced the fifteen DISCOURSES, pronounced by our author between the 2d of Jan. 1769, and the 10th of Dec. 1790:[28] a work which

[28] In the first year the President delivered two Discourses; in the three years following a Discourse annually; afterwards, only every second year, with the exception of that spoken on the removal of the Royal Academy to Somerset-Place.

Previous to the publication of the first edition of these works, a wandering rumour had reached me, that the Discourses delivered by our author were not written by himself, but by his friend Dr. Johnson. This notion appearing to me too ridiculous and absurd to be gravely

contains such a body of just criticism on an extremely difficult subject, clothed in such

confuted, I took no notice of it: leaving those who were weak enough to give credit to such an opinion, to reconcile it with the account given by our author himself in a former page, in which, while he acknowledges how much he had profited by the conversation and instruction of that extraordinary man, who "had qualified his mind to think justly," he at the same time informs us, that Johnson had not contributed even a single sentiment to his Discourses.

A new hypothesis, however, has been lately suggested: and among many other statements concerning the late Mr. Burke, which I know to be erroneous, we have been confidently told that they were written by that gentleman.

The readers of poetry are not to learn, that a similar tale has been told of some of our celebrated English poets. According to some, Denham did not write his admired COOPER'S HILL; and with a certain species of criticks, our great moral poet tells us,

"———most authors steal their works, or buy;
"Garth did not write his own DISPENSARY.

Such insinuations, however agreeable to the envious and malignant, who may give them a temporary currency, can have but little weight with the judicious and ingenuous part of mankind, and therefore in general merit only silent contempt. But that Mr. Burke was the author of all such parts of these Discourses *as do not relate to painting*

perspicuous, elegant, and nervous language, that it is no exaggerated panegyrick to assert,

and sculpture, (what these are, the discoverer of this pretended secret has not informed us,) has lately been so peremptorily asserted, and so particular an appeal has been made on this occasion to their editor, that I think it my duty to refute this injurious calumny, lest posterity should be deceived and misled by the minuteness of uncontradicted misrepresentation, delivered to the world with all the confidence of truth. Fortunately I am able to give a more decisive testimony on this subject, than could reasonably be expected from any one man concerning the writings of another.

To the question then, whether I have not found among my late friend's papers several of his Discourses in the handwriting of Mr. Burke, or of some other *unnamed* person, I answer, that I never saw any one of his Discourses in the handwriting of that illustrious statesman, or of any other person whatsoever, except Sir Joshua Reynolds; and secondly I say, that I am as firmly persuaded that the whole body of these admirable works was composed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, as I am certain that at this moment I am employing my pen in vindication of his fame. I do not mean to assert, that he did not avail himself of the judgment of his critical friends, to render them as perfect as he could; or that he was above receiving from them that species of literary assistance which every candid literary man is willing to receive, and which even that transcendant genius, Mr. Burke, in some instances did not disdain to accept. Of the early Discourses therefore I

that it will last as long as the English tongue, and contribute no less than the productions

have no doubt that some were submitted to Dr. Johnson, and some to Mr. Burke for their examination and revision; and probably each of those persons suggested to their author some minute verbal improvements. Four of the latter Discourses, in his own handwriting, and warm from the brain, the author did me the honour to submit to my perusal; and with great freedom I suggested to him some verbal alterations, and some new arrangements, in each of them, which he very readily adopted. Of one I well remember he gave me the general outline in conversation, as we returned together from an excursion to the country, and before it was yet committed to paper. He soon afterwards composed that Discourse conformably to the plan which he had crayoned out, and sent it to me for such remarks on the language of it as should occur to me. When he wrote his last Discourse, I was not in London; and that Discourse, I know, was submitted to the critical examination of another friend; and that friend was not Mr. Burke. Such was the mighty aid that our author received from those whom he honoured with his confidence and esteem!

The reader has before him the testimony of Sir Joshua Reynolds himself, as far as this calumny relates to Dr. Johnson; he has the decisive testimony of Mr. Burke, both in the passage already quoted and in a further extract from one of his letters to the editor, which will be found in a subsequent page; and, if such high authorities can admit of any additional confirmation, he has (what-

of his pencil to render his name immortal."[29]

ever it may be worth) the testimony of the editor also. Let this plain tale, therefore, for ever seal up the lips of those who have presumed most injuriously to sully and depreciate the literary reputation of a man, who is acknowledged by the unanimous voice of his contemporaries to have been a signal ornament of the age in which he lived; who was not less profound in the theory, than excellent in the practice, of his art; and whose admirable works, of each kind, will transmit his name with unfading lustre to the latest posterity.

[29] Some years after the publication of the first seven of the Discourses, the Author had the honour to receive from the late Empress of Russia, a gold box with a *basso relievo* of her Imperial Majesty in the lid, set round with diamonds; accompanied with a note within, written with her own hand, containing these words: "*Pour le Chevalier Reynolds, en temoignage du contentement que j'ai ressentie à la lecture de ses excellens Discours sur la peinture.*" Before he received this mark of her Imperial Majesty's favour, he had been commissioned to paint an Historical Picture for her, on any subject that he thought fit. The subject which he chose was, The Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents. For this picture, which is now at St. Petersburgh, his Executors received from her Imperial Majesty, fifteen hundred guineas.

The first seven of the Discourses have been translated into French, and I believe into Italian; and doubtless a complete translation of all our author's works, in each of those languages, will soon appear.

To the fame of the Academy the President from its first institution contributed not a little, by exhibiting every year a considerable number of his admirable performances ;[30] and he so highly respected Mr. Moser, to whose unwearied endeavours he conceived this excellent Institution in a great degree owed its establishment, that on his death in 1783, he honoured his memory by a publick testimonial, which probably appeared in some newspaper of the day, and so well deserves a more permanent repository, that I shall give it a place below.[31]

[30] Between 1769 and 1790, inclusive, he exhibited at the Royal Academy, two hundred and forty-four pictures; at the Exhibitions previous to the institution of the Academy, between 1760 and 1768, twenty-five. Total 269. In the whole of this period, the year 1767 was the only one in which he exhibited nothing.

[31] I know not where this eulogy originally appeared; probably, however, it was published in some of the daily papers. It is now printed from a copy in our author's hand-writing:

" Jan. 24, 1783.

" Yesterday died at his apartments in Somerset-Place,

What were the methods by which this great painter attained to such consummate

George Michael Moser, Keeper of the Royal Academy; aged seventy-eight years. He was a native of Switzerland, but came to England very young, to follow the profession of a chaser in gold, in which art he has been always considered as holding the first rank. But his skill was not confined to this alone; he possessed a universal knowledge in all the branches of painting and sculpture, which perfectly qualified him for the place that he held in the Academy, the business of which principally consists in superintending and instructing the Students, who draw or model from the antique figures.

"His private character deserves a more ample testimony than this transient memorial. Few have passed a more inoffensive, or perhaps a more happy life; if happiness or the *enjoyment* of life consists in having the mind always occupied, always intent upon some useful art, by which fame and distinction may be acquired. Mr. Moser's whole attention was absorbed either in the practice, or something that related to the advancement, of art. He may truly be said in every sense to have been the FATHER of the present race of Artists; for long before the Royal Academy was established, he presided over the little Societies which met first in Salisbury-Court, and afterwards in St. Martin's Lane, where they drew from living models. Perhaps nothing that can be said, will more strongly imply his amiable disposition, than that all the different Societies with which he has been connected have always turned their eyes upon him for their Treasurer and chief Manager; when perhaps they would not have

excellence in his profession, it is now, I fear, too late to inquire; yet as I find

contentedly submitted to any other authority. His early society was composed of men whose names are well known in the world; such as Hogarth, Rysbrach, Roubiliac, Wills, Ellis, Vanderbank, &c.

"Though he had outlived all the companions of his youth, he might to the last have boasted of a succession equally numerous; for all that knew him were his friends.

"When he was appointed Keeper of the Royal Academy, his conduct was exemplary, and worthy to be imitated by whoever shall succeed him in that office. As he loved the employment of teaching, he could not fail of discharging that duty with diligence. By the propriety of his conduct he united the love and respect of the Students: he kept order in the Academy, and made himself respected without the austerity or importance of office; all noise and tumult immediately ceased on his appearance; at the same time there was nothing forbidding in his manner, which might restrain the pupils from freely applying to him for advice or assistance.

"All this excellence had a firm foundation: he was a man of sincere and ardent piety, and has left an illustrious example of the exactness with which the subordinate duties may be expected to be discharged by him, whose first care is to please GOD.

He has left one daughter behind him, who has distinguished herself by the admirable manner in which she paints and composes Pieces of Flowers, of which many

among his papers a few slight hints upon this subject, in which he speaks of his merits and defects with that candour which strongly marked his character, though they are only detached thoughts, and did not receive his final revision and correction, I am unwilling to suppress them:

"Not having the advantage of an early academical education, I never had the facility of drawing the naked figure, which an artist ought to have. It appeared to me too late, when I went to Italy and began to feel my own deficiencies, to endeavour to acquire that readiness of invention which I observed others to possess. I consoled myself, however, by remarking that these ready inventors are extremely apt to acquiesce in imperfection; and that if I had not their facility, I should

samples have been seen in the Exhibitions. She has had the honour of being much employed in this way by their Majesties, and for her extraordinary merit has been received into the Royal Academy."

for this very reason be more likely to avoid the defect which too often accompanies it; a trite and common-place mode of invention. How difficult it is for the artist who possesses this facility, to guard against carelessness and common-place invention, is well known, and in a kindred art Metastasio is an eminent instance; who always complained of the great difficulty he found in attaining correctness in consequence of having been in his youth an *Improvvisatore*.—Having this defect constantly in my mind, I never was contented with common-place attitudes[22] or inventions of any kind.—

[22] Our great artist's excellence in this respect has been highly extolled by the late Lord Orford.

"How painting has rekindled from its embers, (says that lively and ingenious writer,) the works of many living artists demonstrate. The prints after the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds have spread his fame to Italy, where they have not at present [1780] a single painter that can pretend to rival an imagination so fertile, that the ATTITUDES of his portraits are as various as those of history. In what age were paternal [illegible] and the hor-

"I considered myself as playing a great game, and, instead of beginning to save money, I laid it out faster than I got it, in purchasing the best examples of art that could be procured; for I even borrowed money for this purpose. The possessing portraits by Titian, Vandyck, Rembrandt, &c. I considered as the best kind of wealth. By studying carefully the works of great masters, this advantage is obtained; we find that certain niceties of expression are capable of being executed, which otherwise we might suppose beyond the reach of art. This gives us a confidence in ourselves; and we are thus incited to endeavour at not only the same happiness of execution, but also at

rours of death pronounced with more expressive accents than in his picture of Count Ugolino? When was infantine loveliness, or embryo-passions, touched with sweeter truth, than in his portraits of Miss Price and the baby Jupiter?"—"The exuberance of his inventions (the same writer observes, in a note,) will be the grammar of future painters of portraits." ANECDOTES OF PAINTING, &c. vol. iv. Advertisement.

other congenial excellencies. Study, indeed, consists in learning to see nature, and may be called the art of using other men's minds. By this kind of contemplation and exercise, we are taught to think in their way, and sometimes to attain their excellence. Thus, for instance, if I had never seen any of the works of Correggio, I should never perhaps have remarked in nature the expression which I find in one of his pieces; or if I had remarked it, I might have thought it too difficult or perhaps impossible to be executed.

"My success, and continual improvement in my art, (if I may be allowed that expression,) may be ascribed in a good measure to a principle which I will boldly recommend to imitation; I mean a principle of honesty; which, in this as in all other instances, is, according to the vulgar proverb, certainly the best policy: I always endeavoured to do my best. Great or vulgar, good subjects or bad, all had nature; by the exact repre-

sentation of which, or even by the endeavour to give such a representation, the painter cannot but improve in his art.---

" My principal labour was employed on the whole together ;[33] and I was never weary of changing, and trying different modes and different effects. I had always some scheme

[33] This also, if I recollect right, is said to have been the principal object of Correggio ; and, however toilsome, is in various places strongly recommended by our author. " A steady attention to the general effect, (as he has observed in his fourteenth Discourse,) takes up more time, and is much more *laborious* to the mind, than any mode of high finishing, or smoothness, without such attention."

Again in the eleventh Discourse ;

" There is nothing in our art which enforces such continued exertion and circumspection, as an attention to the general effect of the whole. It requires much study and much practice ; it requires the painter's entire mind ; whereas the *parts* may be finishing by nice touches while his mind is engaged on other matters : he may even hear a play or a novel read without much disturbance. The Artist who flatters his own indolence, will continually find himself evading this active exertion, and applying his thoughts to the ease and laziness of highly finishing the parts ; producing at last what Cowley calls---" laborious effects of idleness."

in my mind, and a perpetual desire to advance. By constantly endeavouring to do my best, I acquired a power of doing that with spontaneous facility, which at first was the effort of my whole mind: and my reward was threefold; the satisfaction resulting from acting on this just principle, improvement in my art, and the pleasure derived from a constant pursuit after excellence.

"I was always willing to believe that my uncertainty of proceeding in my works, that is, my never being sure of my hand, and my frequent alterations, arose from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in any thing short of a high degree of excellence. I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring: no man indeed could teach me. If I have never been settled with respect to colouring, let it at the same time be remembered, that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every

kind of excellence that I saw in the works of others, without considering that there is in colouring, as in style, excellencies which are incompatible with each other: however, this pursuit, or indeed any similar pursuit, prevents the artist from being tired of his art.---We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring, changed their manner; whilst others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effect of colour, and by leaving out every colour in its turn, showed every colour that I could do without it. As I alternately left out every colour, I tried every new colour; and often, as is well known, failed. The former practice, I am aware, may be compared by those whose first object is ridicule, to that of the poet mentioned in the Spectator, who in a poem of twenty-four books, contrived in each book to leave out a letter. But I was influenced by no such idle or foolish affecta-

tion. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence.[24] This is the only merit I can assume to myself from my conduct in that respect."[25]

[24] Our author was so anxious to discover the methods used by the Venetian Painters, that he destroyed some valuable ancient pictures by rubbing out the various layers of colour, in order to investigate and ascertain it.

Shortly before the first edition of these works was published, some hopes were entertained that the process employed by the great colourists of former times had been preserved; and I was furnished by an eminent artist with an account of the manner in which it had been discovered. Among the manuscript papers of Captain Morley, who had travelled into Italy in the beginning of the last century, was found one supposed to contain the process of colouring used by Titian, the Bassans, and other masters of the Venetian School; which appeared to several of our principal artists and connoisseurs so likely to be genuine, that they gave the possessor of these papers a valuable consideration for the secret that they contained, which was communicated to them under an obligation not to divulge it. As far however as it has hitherto been tried, this process has not, I conceive, answered the expectations that were previously entertained concerning it.

After the gross and unparalleled imposition practised on the publick in the year 1795, by means of forged Manuscripts, under the name of SHAKSPEARE, (the fabri-

Thus ingenuously and modestly has this great painter spoken of himself in the few

cation of which, *though attested*, found a puny, but perfectly homogeneous, champion, whose mortified vanity prompted him to abet and countenance that silly fiction, by confident and groundless assertions, false quotations, and arguments still more flimsy and absurd than the imposture itself,) after such a deception, it was not at all surprising that the cautious inquirer should have been slow in giving credit to any new discovery of *ancient manuscripts*: but the cases were extremely different; for whether the process of colouring said to be discovered was the genuine method of the Venetian School, or at least one similar in its effects, was a matter of experiment, and easily ascertained. Some experiments have accordingly been made, and it seems, with no great success. However ancient therefore these documents may be, they hitherto appear to be of little value.

It is highly probable that the great colourists of former times used certain methods in mixing and laying on their colours, which they did not communicate to others, or at least did not set down in writing; their scholars contenting themselves with adopting as much of the practice of their masters, as inspection and close observation would give them; and that by being thus confined to oral tradition, the mode which they followed, has been lost. Our great painter, however, had undoubtedly attained a part of the ancient process used in the Venetian School; and by various methods of his own invention produced a similar, though perhaps not quite so brilliant an effect of colour.

fragments which I have found on this interesting subject. On the last topick, he might with great truth have added, that he not only always aspired to attain the highest excellence of colouring, but that in very many instances he did attain it; there being no one particular in which he left his contemporaries so far behind him, as the richness and mellowness of his tints, when his colours were successful and permanent.[15] Had he chosen to walk in the

[15] The set of pictures which he painted as designs for the window of New College Chapel, are eminent and *brilliant* instances of the truth of this observation. However high expectation may have been raised by Mr. Warton's very elegant verses on this subject, it will be fully gratified by the view of these admirable pieces. They now form a beautiful decoration of that apartment, which formerly was appropriated to the exhibition of the various works of this great master, after they were dismissed from his painting-room.

As the West Window of New College Chapel, decorated as it now is, will long continue to add to this great Painter's reputation, his own observations on this subject may not be unacceptable to the numerous visitors who shall hereafter be induced to view it. The original scheme, it appears, was, to distribute the various figures

common beaten path, he could have found no difficulty in following the ordinary method pursued by much inferior artists; by

in different places in the Chapel, but this plan was abandoned, as it should seem on our author's suggestion; and on his suggestion also the stone-work of the window was altered, so as to admit one large compartment for paintings in the centre: an alteration in effecting which the gentleman to whom Sir Joshua Reynolds addresses two letters on this occasion, who was then a fellow of New College, was actively instrumental. From these letters, which were obligingly communicated to me by Ozias Humphry, Esq. R. A. I subjoin the following extracts, in confirmation of what has been now stated.

Leicester-Fields, Dec. 27, 1777.

"I am extremely glad to hear the Society have determined to place all our works together in the West Window, to make one complete whole, instead of being distributed in different parts of the Chapel. In my conversation with Mr. Jervais about it, he thought it might be possible to change the stone-work of the window, so as to make a principal predominant space in the centre, without which it will be difficult to produce a great effect. As Mr. Jervais is now at Oxford, I need add no more; I have already expressed to him how much I wished this alteration might be practicable."—

In a subsequent letter (Jan. 9th, 1778,) he says,—"Supposing this scheme to take place, [the alteration above proposed,] my idea, is, to paint in the great space

deviating from it, he attained that grace which sheds such a lustre on far the greater part of his works.[86]

in the centre, Christ in the manger, on the principle that Correggio has done it, in the famous picture called the *Notte*; making all the light proceed from Christ. These tricks of the art, as they may be called, seem to be more properly adapted to glass painting, than any other kind. This middle space will be filled with the Virgin, Christ, Joseph, and Angels; the two smaller spaces on each side I shall fill with the shepherds coming to worship; and the seven divisions below with the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the Four Cardinal Virtues; which will make a proper rustick base or foundation for the support of the Christian Religion. Upon the whole it appears to me, that chance has presented to us materials so well adapted to our purpose, that if we had the whole window of our own invention and contrivance, we should not probably have succeeded better,"—

The original Picture of the Nativity, a copy of which occupies the middle compartment of this window, is in the collection of the Duke of Rutland.

[86] A notion prevails concerning this great painter; that in the *majority* of his works the colours have entirely faded and perished; but this is by no means the case: far the greater part of his pictures have preserved their original hue, and are in perfect preservation. Those which have failed, have been mentioned again and again, and thus have been multiplied in the imaginations of

Though the landscapes which he has given in the back-ground of many of his portraits, are eminently beautiful, he seldom exercised his hand in regular landscape-painting; his only works of this description, that I know of, being one in the collection of Sir Brooke Boothby, Bart.; another in that of Lord Pelham at Stanmer, and the third a View from Richmond-Hill, in the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin. A few more may perhaps be found in other collections. But in the historical department he took a wider range; and by his successful exertions in that higher branch of his art, he has not only enriched various cabinets at home, but ex-

connoisseurs.—Nor should it be forgotten, that the pictures of other considerable painters have not been more durable than his. As many perished pictures of Gainsborough, I have been informed, may be found in cabinets, as of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Even the great colourists of antiquity were not entirely free from this defect. Several pictures of Titian and Vandyck, it is well known, have wholly lost that brilliancy which, without doubt, they once possessed.

tended the fame of the English School to foreign countries.[87]

[87] The most considerable of his Historical and Miscellaneous Pieces are the following; to which, for the sake of posterity, I have adjoined the prices paid for them and the purchasers' names, where I could discover them.

Subjects.	Prices.	Purchasers.
Garrick, between Tragedy and Comedy.....	300 Gs.	the Earl of Halifax. Since his death sold to Mr. Angerstein, for 250 Guineas.
Thais [Emily Pott].....	100 ..	Hon. Mr. Greville.
Cleopatra dissolving the pearl [Kitty Fisher]....	——	——
Venus, chiding Cupid for learning arithmetick...	100 ..	The Earl of Charlemont.
Another,—the same subject.	100 ..	Sir B. Boothby, Bt.
A Captain of Banditti....	35 ..	John Crewe, Esq.
A Shepherd Boy.....	50 ..	Lord Irwin.
Count Ugolino.....	400 ..	The D. of Dorset.
A boy in a Venetian dress..	—— ..	Do.
Lesbia, ...	75 ..	Do.
Wang y Tong, a Chinese.	70 ..	Do.
A Gipsey telling fortunes..	350 ..	Do.
A boy with a drawing in his hand.....	50 ..	Do.
Beggar Children.....	—— ..	Do.

During the brilliant career which he ran, his profession did not permit him often to make excursions from town. In the summer, however, he at different periods visited

Subjects.	Prices.	Purchasers.
Covent-Garden Cupid.....	——	.. The D. of Dorset,
Cupid, as a link-boy.....	——	.. Do.
A boy with a child on his back, and cabbage-nets in his hand.....	——	.. Do.
The Comick Muse (Mrs. Abington)..	——	.. Do.
A Bacchante (Mc. Baccelli)	——	.. Do.
A Girl with a bird-cage..	——	.. Do.
The calling of Samuel.....	50 Gs.	Do.
Another,—the same subject.	75	.. Earl of Darnley.
Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, sitting on a garden-seat; Mr. Garrick reading to her. ..	150	.. The Hon. T. Fitzmaurice.
A Girl with a mouse-trap. ..	50	.. Count D'Ademar.
A Landscape, ...	50	.. Earl of Aylesford.
A sleeping boy.	50	.. Do.
A Landscape.....	50	.. Sir B. Boothby, Bt,
The Marchioness Townshend, Mrs. Gardiner, and the Hon. Mrs. Beresford, decorating the statue of Hymen.	450	.. Viscount Mountjoy.
Hope nursing Love. .....——		.. Lord Holland.
Another,—the same subject.——		.. Earl of Inchiquin.

the seats of the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Boringdon, Lord Eliot, Lord Ossory, Lord

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
Another,—the same subject.	150	.. Henry Hope, Esq.
A Strawberry Girl.	50 Gs.	Earl of Carysfort.
A Nymph [Mrs. Hartley] and young Bacchus.	——	.. Do.
The Snake in the Grass. [This has been called, Love untying the zone of Beauty.]	200	.. Do.
Another.....	A present.	Henry Hope, Esq.
Another.....	100 Gs.	Prince Potemkin.
The Continence of Scipio.	500	.. Do.
The Nativity [a design for the window of New College Chapel in Oxford.]	1200	.. The D. of Rutland.
The infant Jupiter.....	100	.. Do.
An old man reading a ballad.	——	.. Do.
The Calling of Samuel.	100	.. Do.
A boy praying.	50	.. Sent to France by Mr. Chamier, in 1778.
The Death of Dido.	200	.. Mr. Bryant.
The Theory of Painting, ..	——	.. In the Royal Academy.
Another.	——	.. In the collection of the E. of Inchiquin.
A Shepherd Boy.	——	.. In the same collection.
A Shepherdess with a lamb.	——	.. Do.

Palmerston, Mr. Burke, and other friends;[39] and occasionally spent a few days at his villa

Subjects,	Prices.	Purchasers.
A Girl with a kitten.....	—— ..	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.
A Girl with a muff.	—— ..	Do.
Cælia lamenting the death of her sparrow. [Mrs. Collyer.]	——	——
L'Allegro [Mrs. Hale]; several figures in the background.	—— ..	Lord Harewood.
Robinetta. [the Hon. Mrs, Tollemache.]	——	——
Diana. [Lady Napier.]	——	——
Diana. [the Duchess of Manchester.]	—— ..	The Duke of Manchester.
Master Wynne, as St. John.	——	——
Master Crewe, as Hen. VIII.	—— ..	John Crew, Esq.
Master Herbert, in the character of Bacchus.....	75 Gs.	Lord Porchester.
Juno. [Lady Blake.]	——	——
Hebe [Miss Meyer, a whole-length figure on a half-length canvass.]	——	——
Melancholy [Miss Jones.]	——	——
Young Hannibal [a boy in armour.]	——	——

on Richmond-Hill; but he had very little relish for a country life, and was always glad

SUBJECTS,	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
Francis, Duke of Bedford, as St. George; with his brothers, Lord John and Lord William Russel..	——	——
The Fortune-teller. [Lady Charlotte and Lord H. Spencer.]	—— ..	The Duke of Marlborough.
Miranda [The Hon. Mrs. Tollemache] and Caliban.	——	——
St. Agnes [Mrs. Quarington]	50 Gs.	R. P. Knight, Esq.
The Triumph of Truth. [Dr. Beattie, with two figures representing Truth and Falsehood]	—— ..	Dr. Beattie.
A boy laughing.....	50 ..	— Bromwell, Esq.
Ariadne.....	35 ..	W. Lock, Esq.
Dionysius, Areopagita....	——	——
The Captive. [This has been called, the Banished Lord, and Cartouche]	80 ..	Charles Long, Esq.
The Calling of Samuel....	——	Do.
Lady Sarah Bunbury, sacrificing to the Graces....	—— ..	Sir C. Bunbury. Bt.
The infant Moses in the bulrushes	125 ..	The Duke of Leeds.
Edwin.....	55 ..	Do.

to return to London, to which he was not less attached than Dr. Johnson: with him,

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
A child with Angels....	——	.. The Duke of Leeds.
The Virgin and Child. [This picture was not quite finished].....	65 G.	Mr. J. Bannister.
The Angel contemplating The Cross; being the upper part of the Nativity.	——	.. Bequeathed to the Duke of Portland.
The four Cardinal Virtues, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude; and Faith, Hope, and Charity; Designs for the Window of New College. Oxford, painted by Mr. Jervais.....	——	.. In the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin.
A Bacchante.....	50	.. Sir W Hamilton.
Another.....	75	.. The Earl of Lauderdale.
A holy family.....	500	.. Mr. Macklin, Printseller. Afterwards sold to L. Cwydir for 700 guineas.

justly considering that metropolis as the head-quarters of intellectual society. In

Subjects.	Prices.	Purchasers.
Tuccia, the Vestal Virgin.	300 Gs.	Mr. Macklin.
The Gleaners [Mrs. Macklin, her daughter, and Miss Potts].....	300 ..	Do.
St. John.....	150 ..	— Willet, Esq.
St. Cecilia [Mrs. Sheridan, and two daughters of —— Coote Purdon, Esq.]....	150 ..	R. B. Sheridan, Esq.
Two Groups, in the manner of Paul Veronese; one containing the portraits of the Duke of Leeds, Lord Dundas, Constantine Lord Mulgrave, Lord Seaforth, the Hon. C. Greville, Charles Crowle, Esq. and the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks, Bart.; the other, those of Sir W. Hamilton, Sir W. W. Wynne, Bart. Richard Thompson, Esq. Sir John Taylor, —— Payne Galway, Esq. John Smyth, Esq. and Spencer Stanhope, Esq.	—— ..	Society of Dilettanti.

July 1781, in order to view the most celebrated productions of the Flemish and Dutch

Subjects.	Prices.	Purchasers.
A boy with a port-folio. ..	50 Gs.	Earl of Warwick.
A studious boy.....	——..	G. Hardinge, Esq.
A pouting girl.....	——..	Do.
The family of George, Duke of Marlborough.....	700 ..	The Duke of Marlborough.
Circe.....	35 ..	Sir C. Bunbury, Bt.
The Children in the Wood.	60 ..	Lord Palmerston.
A Girl leaning on a pedestal.	75 ..	Do.
The Infant Academy.....	——..	Do. by bequest.
Venus..	——..	The Earl of Upper Ossory, by bequest.
Una, from Spencer. [Miss Beauclerk.]	——..	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.
King Lear.....	——..	Do.
Heads of Angels, a study. From a daughter of Lord William Gordon.....	100 ..	Lord W. Gordon.
Cardinal Beaufort.....	500 ..	Mr. Ald. Boydell.
Robert Goodfellow.....	100 ..	Do.
The Cauldron-Scene in Macbeth	1000l..	Do
Resignation, from Goldsmith's Deserted Village.	——..	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.

Schools, in company with his friend Mr. Metcalfe, he made a tour to the Netherlands

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
Venus, and a boy piping ..	250 Gs.	J. J. Angerstein, Esq.
Mrs. Siddons, in the character of the Tragick Muse.	700 ..	N. Desenfans, Esq.
A Girl with a cat	—— ..	Do.
A Girl with a bird's nest ..	—— ..	Do.
The Infant Hercules in the Cradle. [A single figure, painted before the large picture.]	150 ..	Earl Fitzwilliam.
Hercules, strangling the serpents	1500 ..	Empress of Russia.
Cupid and Psyche	250 ..	Charles Long, Esq.
Cymon and Ighigenia. [This was the last fancy-picture painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.]	—— ..	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin,

[38] In a Letter to Mr. Baretti, June 10, 1761, Dr. Johnson says—"Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands." Writing a few months afterwards to the same person, he says, "Mr. Reynolds gets six thousand a year."

[39] In 1762 he spent some weeks in his native county, Devonshire, accompanied by Dr. Johnson. Of this visit [illegible] they were entertained at the seats of

and Holland, and the fruit of his travel was a very pleasing account of their journey,[40] containing remarks on the pictures preserved in the various churches and cabinets that he visited; to which he has subjoined a masterly character of Rubens. His critical observations on the many excellent pieces that he viewed at Antwerp and Brussels, in the Dusseldorp Gallery, and at Amsterdam,

many noblemen and gentlemen in the West of England. Mr. Boswell has given a particular account in his Life of Johnson, i. 344. 8vo.

[40] Of this work Mr. Burke thus writes, in the Letter already quoted:

"I have read over not only that Life, [the account of our author prefixed to the first edition,] but some part of the DISCOURSES with an unusual sort of pleasure; partly because, being faded a little in my memory, they have a sort of appearance of novelty; partly by reviving recollections mixed with melancholy and satisfaction. The FLEMISH JOURNAL I had never seen before. You trace in that, every where, the spirit of the DISCOURSES, supported by new examples. He is always the same man; the same philosophical, the same artist-like critick, the same sagacious observer, with the same minuteness, without the smallest degree of trifling."

which are now for the first time given to the world, have since his death acquired an additional value; for by the baleful success and ravages of the French plunderers, who since that period have desolated Europe, many of the most celebrated works of the Flemish School in the Netherlands (for I will not gratify our English republicans by calling it *Belgium*) have been either destroyed or carried away to that "OPPROBRIOUS DEN OF SHAME," which it is to be hoped no polished Englishman will ever visit.—Many of the pictures of Rubens being to be sold in 1783, in consequence of certain religious houses being suppressed by the Emperor, he again in that year visited Antwerp and Brussels, and devoted several days to contemplating the productions of that great painter.[41] On his return from his first tour,

[41] On viewing the pictures of Rubens a second time, they appeared much less brilliant than they had done on the former inspection. He could not for some time account for this circumstance; but when he recollected

his own pieces (as he remarked to Mr. Metcalfe) seemed to him to want force; and the portraits which he painted between that period and 1789, it is observable, have still more animation, energy, and brilliancy of colouring, than his former works.

In the same year (1783) the late Mr. Mason having finished his elegant translation of Du Fresnoy's Art of Painting, our author enriched that work with a very ample and ingenious Commentary, which, together

that when he first saw them, he had his note-book in his hand, for the purpose of writing down short remarks, he perceived what had occasioned their now making a less impression in this respect than they had done formerly. By the eye passing immediately from the white paper to the picture, the colours derived uncommon richness and warmth. For want of this foil, they afterwards appeared comparatively cold.

This little circumstance was communicated to me by Sir George Beaumont, whose good taste and skill discovered, that in the two groups mentioned in a former page, our author had Paul Veronese in view; which, on the remark being made, he said was the case,

with the Poem to which it relates, is now published with his DISCOURSES; Mr. Mason having obligingly permitted his translation to be printed in this collection of his friend's works. The Annotations, indeed, without the poem, would not be intelligible, "The DISCOURSES," as their author has observed,[42] "having scarce any relation to the mechanical part of the art,[43] these Notes may be considered as in some measure supplying that deficiency;" and we may with truth add, that these two works comprise the whole science and practice of painting.

On the death of Mr. Ramsay in the following year, our author (11th August, 1784,)

[42] In a loose fragment.

[43] A few practical instructions are given in the eighth and twelfth Discourses; and in the former towards the conclusion, some of the means are pointed out, by which the Venetian painters produced such great effect in their pictures. Perhaps some useful hints also may be discovered by the Student dispersed in the other Discourses.

was sworn principal painter in ordinary to his Majesty; which office he possessed to his death: and two months afterwards on St. Luke's Day, he was presented with the freedom of the Painter's Company, an honour which, though to him of little value, he received with his usual complacency and politeness.

As posterity may be curious to know what were the prices paid at various periods to this great painter for his works, it may not perhaps be thought too minute to add, that about the year 1755, his price for a three-quarters, or as it is popularly called, a head, was but twelve guineas; in the beginning of 1758, twenty guineas; soon after 1760, twenty-five guineas; in 1770, thirty-five guineas; and in 1781, fifty guineas; which continued to be the price till he ceased to paint. The price of a half-length during this latter period was one hundred guineas; and for a whole-length two hundred guineas

were paid.[44] From a paper which I transcribed some years ago in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, from an office-book which formerly belonged to Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, it appears that Vandyck in 1632 received but twenty-five pounds for a whole-length picture of Charles the First; for a half-length of the Queen, twenty pounds; and "for one great piece of his Majestie, the Queene, and their children, one hundred pounds:" which, however, considering the change in the value of money and the modes of life, may be estimated as equal to three hundred pounds at this day.

The personal character of Sir Joshua Reynolds is well known to many of his surviving friends and admirers; but it would be

[44] His pupils were Giuseppe Marchi, who accompanied him from Italy; Mr. Beech, Mr. Baron, Mr. Berridge, Mr. Parry, (son to the celebrated player on the harp,) Mr. Gill, Mr. Dusine, Mr. Northcote, R. A. Mr. Doughty, and Mr. Score.

great injustice to him, and an unpardonable inattention to posterity, not to give in this place a slight sketch of his manners, habits, and endowments. He was in stature rather under the middle size; of a florid complexion, and a lively and pleasing aspect; well made, and extremely active.[45] His ap-

[45] The last portrait which he painted of himself, (with spectacles) in 1788, is extremely like him, and exhibits him exactly as he appeared in his latter days, in domestick life. It is a three-quarters, in the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin; and his Grace the Duke of Leeds has a duplicate of it. There is a portrait of him by himself in the dining-room of the Society of *Dilettanti* in Pall-Mall, a three-quarters also; he is dressed in a loose robe, and has his own hair. Another, (in which he holds his hand to his ear, to aid the sound,) painted for Mr. Thrale about 1775, is in possession of Mrs. Piozzi. Another (a half-length,) is in the Royal Academy, with a cap, and the gown of a Doctor of the Civil Law: which honour he received from the University of Oxford, July 9, 1773: in this picture is introduced the bust of Michael Angelo, on whom he pronounced so high an encomium in his last Discourse. Another in the same dress, a three-quarters, is at Belvoir Castle; and a third in the same dress, is in the gallery of the Great Duke at Florence. Another portrait of him is preserved in the Town-Hall at Plympton, also painted and presented by himself; in this pic-

pearance at first sight impressed the spectator with the idea of a well-born and well-bred

ture a red gown is thrown carelessly about him, and he is without a cap. One nearly resembling this, and painted before it, is at Taplow-Court. We have another portrait of our author in the dress of a Shepherd, with Mr. Jervais the Glass-Painter, in one of the pictures painted as designs for the great window of New College Chapel, in Oxford; and Mr. Farington, R. A. has a portrait of him, by himself, as a painter, with a canvass, easel, &c. before him. Another portrait of him, by himself, is in possession of Robert Lovel Gwatkin, Esq. of Killiow, in Cornwall. Lord Inchiquin has two portraits of our author when young, one when he was about thirty years old, in his own hair; the other younger, (in the manner of Rembrandt,) in his own hair also, with his great coat and hat on. Another youthful portrait done before he went to Italy, is said to be in the possession of Thomas Lane, Esq. of Coffleat in Devonshire.

There is also a portrait of him, painted by C. G. Stuart, an American, about the year 1784, in the possession of Mr. Alderman Boydell; another by Zaffanii, in a picture representing all the Artists of the Academy about the year 1770, in the King's Collection; and not long before his death, when he was much indisposed, he sat to Mr. Breda, a Swedish painter, whose performance appeared a few years ago in the Exhibition.

Soon after Gainsborough settled in London, Sir Joshua Reynolds thought himself bound in civility to pay him a visit. That painter, however, (as our author told me,)

English gentleman. With an uncommon equability of temper, which, however, never

took not the least notice of him for several years; but at length called on him, and requested him to sit for his picture. Sir Joshua complied, and sat once to that artist, but being soon afterwards taken ill, he was obliged to go to Bath for his health. On his return to London perfectly restored, he sent Gainsborough word that he was returned, to which Gainsborough, who was extremely capricious, only replied, that he was glad to hear that Sir Joshua Reynolds was well; and he never afterwards desired Sir Joshua to sit, nor had any other intercourse with him, till Gainsborough was dying, when he sent to request to see him, and thanked him for the very liberal and favourable manner in which he had always spoken of his works; a circumstance which our author has thought worth recording in his Fourteenth Discourse. The capricious conduct of Gainsborough did not prevent our author from purchasing from him his well-known picture of a girl tending pigs, for which one hundred guineas were paid.

A marble bust of Sir Joshua Reynolds by Ciracbi, an Italian Sculptor, is in possession of the Earl of Inchiquin; and another bust modelled from the life, in *terra cotta*, more like than the marble bust, which was done from it, was sold by auction by Greenwood, in 1792. I have a medallion modelled in wax by Mountstephen, which is a very faithful representation of this great painter, in his usual evening dress. It was done in 1790, when he was in his sixty-seventh year.

degenerated into insipidity or apathy, he possessed a constant flow of spirits, which

The Engravings that have been made from his various portraits are, 1. By V. Green, in Mezzotinto, from the picture in the Academy. 2. By J. Collier, from the same; a small oval. 3. By James Watson, in Mezzotinto, from the picture belonging to the Society of *Dilettanti*. 4. By C. Townly, from the picture in the Gallery at Florence. 5. By I. K. Sherwin, from the same picture. 6. By R. Earlom, from Zaffanii's picture of the Academy. 7. By Pariset, from a drawing by Falconet. 8. By Facius, from the window in New College Chapel. 9 Another, when young, his hand shading his forehead; by S. W. Reynolds, from the picture in Mr. Lane's possession. 10. By Caroline Kirkley; from Mr. Gwatkin's picture. 11. That prefixed to the present edition of his works; engraved by Caroline Watson, from the portrait in the collection of Lord Inchiquin. There is, I believe, a copy of this by T. Holloway. 12. By———, from Mr. Breda's picture.

The tricks which are often practised with engraved copper-plates, are well known. At the time the person so justly execrated, and branded with the name of THE MONSTER, made much noise, the dealers in articles of this kind were very desirous of some representation of him; but not being able suddenly to procure one, they made an old plate, which had been engraved for a magazine, and with the aid of the name subjoined was intended to pass for the portrait of our author, serve their purpose. As the print had no resemblance to Sir Jo[illegible] Reynolds, and

rendered him at all times a most pleasing companion; always cheerful, and ready to be amused with whatever was going forward, and from an ardent thirst of knowledge anxious to obtain information on every subject that was presented to his mind. In conversation, his manner was perfectly natural, simple, and unassuming. Though he had occasionally dipped into many books, not having had time for regular and systematick study, some topicks which had been long discussed and settled, were new to him; and hence, merely by the vigour of his excellent understanding, he often suggested ingenious theories and formed just conclusions, which had already been deduced by the laborious disquisitions of others. Finding how little time he could spare from his profession, for the purpose of acquiring general knowledge from books, he very early and

had indeed a most *formidable* appearance, by striking out the original inscription, and substituting THE MONSTER, it did very well.

wisely resolved to partake as much as possible of the society of all the ingenious and learned men of his own time;[46] in consequence of which, and of his cheerful and convivial habits, his table[47] for above thirty years exhibited an assemblage of all the talents of Great-Britain and Ireland; there being during that period scarce a person in the three kingdoms distinguished for his attainments in literature or the arts,

[46] He has strongly recommended the same practice to other artists, in his Seventh Discourse, p. 191.

[47] The *noctes cænæque Deûm* enjoyed at this table, (as Mr. Boswell, in the Dedication prefixed to his most instructive and entertaining Life of Dr. Johnson, has justly described the *symposium* of our author,) will be long remembered by those who had the happiness to partake of them; but the remembrance must always be accompanied with regret, when it is considered that the death of their amiable and illustrious host has left a chasm in society, and that no such common centre of union for the accomplished and the learned now exists, or is likely soon to exist, in London. I remember on one occasion to have sat down at Sir Joshua Reynolds's table with fifteen persons, eleven or twelve of whom had made a distinguished figure in the world.

or for his exertions at the bar, in the senate, or the field, who was not occasionally found there. The pleasure and instruction which he derived from such company induced him, in conjunction with Dr. Johnson, to establish what has been called the LITERARY CLUB, though its members have never assumed that denomination; a society which has now subsisted for more than forty years, and can boast of having had enrolled among them many of the most celebrated characters of the present century.[*]

[*] As Sir Joshua Reynolds was the first proposer, and, in conjunction with Dr. Johnson, founder of this Club, a short account of it may not be here improper. It was founded in the year 1764; and the original scheme was, that it should consist of only twelve members, and that they should be men of such talents, and so well known to each other, that any two of them, if they should not happen to be joined by more, might be good company to each other.

The original members were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Langton, Mr. Anthony Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, the Hon. Topham Beauclerk, and Dr. Goldsmith. Mr. Samuel Dyer, Sir Robert Chambers, and Dr. Percy, now Lord

In the fifteen years during which I had the pleasure of living with our author on

Bishop of Dromore, were soon afterwards elected. They at first met once a week, on Monday evening, at the Turk's Head in Gerrard-street. In 1772, the Club still consisted of only twelve members. On its enlargement in March 1773, two new members were added; the Earl of Charlemont, and Mr. Garrick; and not long afterwards several other members were chosen. About the year 1775, instead of supping together once a week, they resolved to dine together once a fortnight during the sitting of Parliament; and on that footing this Society (which has gradually been increased to thirty-five members, and can never exceed forty,) still subsists. They now meet at the Thatched House, in St. James's-street.

The total number of persons who have been members of this Club, is seventy-four. Of these the following forty-two are dead: Sir J. Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Chamier, Mr. Langton, Mr. Beauclerk, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Dyer, Dr. Goldsmith, Sir Robert Chambers, Lord Charlemont, Mr. Garrick, John Dunning Lord Ashburton, Dr. Adam Smith, Mr. Colman, Dr. Shipley Bishop of St. Asaph, Mr. Vesey, Mr. Thomas Warton, Mr. Gibbon, Dr. Hinchliffe Bishop of Peterborough, Sir William Jones, Mr. Richard Burke, junior, Mr. Boswell, the Marquis of Bath, Dr. Warren, the Rev. Dr. Farmer, the Duke of Leeds, Lord Lucan, Mr. Steevens, Dr. Joseph Warton, Lord Palmerston, Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Marlay Bishop of Waterford, Sir William Hamilton, Edward Lord Eliot, Lord Macart-

terms of great intimacy and friendship, he appeared to me the happiest man I have ever known. Indeed he acknowledged to a friend in his last illness, that he had been fortunate and happy beyond the common lot of humanity. The dissipated, the needy, and the industrious, are apt to imagine, that the idle and the rich are the chosen favourites of heaven, and that they alone pos-

ney, Dr. Barnard Bishop of Limerick, Mr. Charles Fox, Dr. Horsley Bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Douglas Bishop of Salisbury, and Dr. French Laurence.

The *present members* [*March 8, 1809*] are, Dr. Percy Bishop of Dromore, Sir Charles Bunbury, Mr. Sheridan, Lord Ossory, Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Windham, Sir William Scott, Lord Spencer, Dr. Burney, Mr. Courtenay, Sir Charles Blagden, Major Rennel, the Hon. Frederick North, Mr. Canning, Mr. Marsden, Mr. Frere, Mr. Thomas Grenville, Dr. Vincent Dean of Westminster, Mr. William Lock, Mr. George Ellis, Lord Minto, Sir William Grant Master of the Rolls, Sir George Staunton, Mr. Charles Wilkins, Mr. Drummond, Dr. Vaughan, Sir Henry Englefield, Lord Holland, Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Hatchett, Mr. Charles Vaughan, and the writer of this account. They are all placed in the order of their election, except the person last mentioned, who had the honour to be chosen a member in 1782.

sess what all mankind are equally anxious to attain: but, supposing always a decent competence, the genuine source of happiness is virtuous employment, pursued with ardour, and regulated by our own choice. Sir Joshua Reynolds was constantly employed in a lucrative profession, the study and practice of which afforded him inexhaustible entertainment, and left him not one idle or languid hour; and he enjoyed as much fame as the most ambitious candidate for popular approbation could desire. That he should have been unconscious of the very high rank that he held in the publick estimation, and of the extraordinary excellence which he had attained in his art, was not to be expected; but he never shewed any such consciousness, and was as perfectly free from vanity and ostentation, as he was from artifice or affectation of any kind. His ardent love of truth, in which respect he was a zealous disciple of Dr. Johnson, and his strong antipathy to all false pretensions, and

to any thing indirect, artificial, or affected, formed a striking part of his character; and were indeed, if I do not greatly deceive and flatter myself, the congenial sentiments which principally operated in attaching him to the person to whose province it has fallen to pay this slight tribute to his memory. While engaged in his painting-room, he had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with all the beautiful,[49] accomplished, and illustrious characters of his time; and when not employed in his art, his hours were generally passed in the most pleasing and enlightened society that London could produce. His mind was never torpid; but always at work on some topick or other. He had a strong turn and relish for humour, in all its various forms, and very quickly saw the weak sides of things. Of the numerous characters which presented themselves to him in the mixed companies in which he

[49] He had painted, as he once observed to me, *two generations* of the beauties of England.

lived, he was a nice and sagacious observer, as I have had frequent occasion to remark;[50] and I have found among his papers some very ingenious, though unfinished, observations on the manners and habits of two very eminent men of his acquaintance. He delighted much in marking the dawning traits of the youthful mind, and the actions and bodily movements of young persons; a circumstance which probably enabled him to portray children with such exquisite happiness and truth. It was one of his favourite maxims, that all the gestures of children are graceful, and that the reign of distortion and unnatural attitude commences with the introduction of the dancing-master.

Though from the time of his returning

[50] In confirmation of this remark, I may produce the testimony of Dr. Johnson, who said to Mr. Boswell, in 1780, that "he knew no man who had passed through life with more observation than Sir Joshua Reynolds." Life of Johnson, 2nd Edit. iii. 252.

from Italy he was very deaf,[51] he contrived by the aid of an ear-trumpet[52] to partake of the conversation of his friends with great facility and address; and such was the serenity of his temper, that what he did not hear, he never troubled those with whom he conversed, to repeat. To this gentle composure of mind Goldsmith alluded, when in describing Sir Joshua Reynolds he employed the epithet *bland*, a word eminently happy, and characteristick of his easy and placid manners;[53] but taking into our consideration

[51] His deafness was originally occasioned by a cold that he caught in the Vatican, by painting for a long time near a stove, by which the damp vapours of that edifice were attracted, and affected his head. When in company with only one person, he heard very well, without the aid of a trumpet.

[52] Le Sage, the celebrated author of GILBLAS, (as Mr. Spence mentions in his ANECDOTES,) though very deaf, enjoyed the conversation of his friends by the same means, (the aid of a *cornette*,) and was a very pleasing companion.

[53] See RETALIATION, a poem by Goldsmith, in which he has drawn the characters of several of his friends, in the form of epitaphs to be placed on their tombs:

at once the soundness of his understanding, and the mildness and suavity of his deportment, perhaps Horace's description of the amiable friend of the younger Scipio,---the *mitis sapientia* Lælî,[53] may convey to posterity

* * * * * *

"Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
"He has not left a wiser or better behind:
"His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;
"His manners were gentle, complying, and bland:
"Still born to improve us in every part,
"His pencil our faces, his manners our heart:
"To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,—
"When they judg'd without skill, he was still hard of hearing;
"When they talk'd of their Raffaelles, Correggios, and stuff,
"He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff."

* * * * * *

These were the last lines the author wrote. He had written half a line more of this character, when he was seized with the nervous fever which carried him in a few days to the grave. He intended to have concluded with his own character.

[53] Even the classical reader may not perhaps immediately recollect in how many points these two celebrated persons resemble each other. Each of them certainly had some qualifications, to which the other had no pretensions; as Lælius knew nothing of painting, so our author had no

a more perfect idea of our illustrious painter, than the unfinished delineation of his poetical friend, to which I allude.

claim either to the character of a military commander, or a distinguished orator. But the qualities which they possessed in common are so numerous, as fully to justify the present juxta-position.

The portrait of Lælius has been drawn by Mr. Melmoth, with his usual fidelity. "He seems (says that very elegant writer) to have united in his character, whether considered in a moral, a civil, or a philosophical view, all those talents of the mind and qualities of the heart, that could justly recommend him to the general esteem of his own times, and transmit his name with honour to posterity. There was a politeness and affability in his address, a sprightliness and vivacity in his conversation, together with a constant equality in his temper, that wonderfully recommended him to all those with whom he had any connection; insomuch that what was observed of Socrates, was equally remarked in Lælius, that he always appeared with a serene and placid countenance.

"To the advantages of these captivating manners, were added the ornaments of a most cultivated and improved understanding: he was not only one of the finest gentlemen, but of the first orators, and the most elegant scholars of the age. Lælius and Scipio indeed, united as they were by genius and talents, no less than by esteem and affection, equally conspired in refining the taste and encouraging the literature of their countrymen. They were the patrons, after having been the disciples, of

If our author was not much inclined to exchange the animated scenes of the metropolis,

Panætius and Polybius; and both the philosopher and the historian had the honour and happiness of constantly sharing with them those hours that were not devoted to the publick service. But the severer muses did not entirely engross those intervals of leisure, which these illustrious friends occasionally snatched from the great business of the state; Terence and Lucilius were frequently admitted into these parties; where wit and wisdom jointly conspired to render the conversation at once both lively and instructive."—LÆLIUS, or an ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP, &c. *Remarks*, p. 168.

The ingenious writer then proceeds to consider this celebrated person in a political light; but as it is not here necessary to place him in this point of view, I do not transcribe that part of his encomium.—He has not quoted the authorities on which this representation is founded; I shall therefore add here such passages (principally from Cicero) as I suppose he had in contemplation, which may serve further to illustrate the character in question.

"Erat in C. Lælio *multa hilaritas*; in ejus familiari Scipione ambitio major, vita tristior." DE OFF. i. 30.

"—— in rebus prosperis, et ad voluntatem nostram fluentibus, superbiam, fastidium, arrogantiamque magnopere fugiamus: nam ut adversas res, sic secundas immoderatè ferre, levitatis est; *præclaraque est æquabilitas in omni vitâ, et idem semper vultus, eademque frons: ut de Socrate, item de* C. LÆLIO *accepimus*." Ibid. i. 26.

"Hujusmodi Scipio ille fuit, quem non pœnitebat

for the quiet and retirement of the country, yet when he was there, (and indeed in other

facere idem quod tu; habere eruditissimum hominem et pene divinum, [Panætium] domi; cujus oratione et præceptis, quanquam erant eadem ista quæ te delectant, tamen asperior non est factus, sed (ut accepi à senibus) lenissimus. *Quis vero* C. LÆLIO *comior? quis jucundior*, eodem ex studio isto? *quis illo gravior? sapientior?*" ORAT. pro Murena, 31.

"Ex hoc esse hunc numero, quem patres nostri viderunt, divinum hominem Africanum; ex hoc C. LÆLIUM L. Furium, *moderatissimos homines* et *continentissimos*." Pro Arch. 7.

"—Viriatus Lusitanus, cui quidem etiam exercitus nostri imperatoresque cesserunt; quem C. LÆLIUS, is qui *sapiens* usurpatur, *prætor fregit*, et comminuit, ferocitatemque ejus ita repressit, ut facilè bellum reliquis traderet." DE OFF. ii. 11.

"Similemne putas C. LÆLII unum consulatum fuisse, et eum quidem cum repulsâ, (si cum *sapiens et bonus vir*, qualis ille fuit, suffragiis præteritur, non populus a bono consule potius quam ille a vano populo repulsam fert,) sed tamen utrum malles te, si potestas esset, semel, ut LÆLIUM, consulem, an ut Cinnam, quater?" TUSCUL. v. 19.

"Quando enim me in hunc locum deduxit oratio, docebo, meliora me didicisse de colendis diis immortalibus jure pontificio, et *majorum more*, capedunculis iis quas Numa nobis reliquit, de quibus in illa *aureolâ oratiunculâ* dicit LÆLIUS, quam rationibus Stoicorum." DE NAT. DEOR. iii. 17.

situations, when not engaged in grave employments,) he was as playful as either

"—— itaque quos ingenio, quos studio, quos doctrinâ præditos vident, quorumque *vitam constantem et probatam*, ut Catonis, LÆLII, Scipionis, aliorumque plurium, viderentur eos esse quales se ipsi velint." TOP. 20.

"Sæpe ex socero meo audivi, quum is diceret, socerum suum Lælium semper fere cum Scipione solitum rusticari, eosque incredibiliter repuerascere esse solitos, quum rus ex urbe, tanquam e vinculis, evolavissent. Non audeo dicere de talibus viris, sed tamen ita solet narrare Scævola, conchas eos et umbilicos ad Cajetam et ad Laurentum legere consuêsse, et ad omnem animi remissionem ludumque descendere." DE ORAT. ii. 6.

An old Scholiast on Horace goes still further, and informs us, that these two great men sometimes indulged themselves in the same kind of boyish playfulness which has been recorded of the flagitious Cromwell and one of his fellow-regicides: "Scipio Africanus et LÆLIUS feruntur tam fuisse familiares et amici Lucilio, ut quodam tempore Lælio circum lectos triclinii fugienti Lucilius superveniens, eum obtortâ mappâ, quasi feriturus, sequeretur.

"Memoriâ teneo, Smyrnæ me ex P. Rutilio Rufo audisse, quum diceret adolescentulo se accidisse, ut ex Senatus-consulto P. Scipio et D. Brutus, ut opinor, consules, de re atroci magnâque quærerent. Nam quum in silvâ Silâ facta cædes esset, notique homines interfecti; insimulareturque familia, partim etiam liberi societatis ejus, quæ picarias de P. Cornelio, L. Mummio, censori-

readily have gathered pebbles on the sea-shore; and though he was not an orator, if his studies and pursuits had originally led him to a popular profession, and he had been obliged to address a publick assembly, it is clear from his manners and his writings, that in the character of his eloquence he would have resembled the perspicuous and elegant Lælius, rather than the severe and vehement Galba. For the rest, the conformity is greater than at the first view may be supposed. As Lælius was the disciple and protector of Panætius, and the patron and companion of Lucilius, Sir Joshua Reynolds was the scholar and friend of Johnson, and the friend and benefactor of Goldsmith. What the illustrious Scipio was to Lælius, the all-knowing and all-accomplished Burke was to Reynolds. For the pleadings and *aureola oratiuncula* of the amiable Roman, we have the luminous, I had almost said, the *golden* DISCOURSES of our author. As Lælius, admired and respected as he was, was repulsed

from the consulate, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in consequence of an unhappy misunderstanding, was forced for a short time to relinquish the Presidency of the Academy.—In publick estimation, in uniform success in life, in moderation in prosperity, in the applause and admiration of contemporaries, in simplicity of manners and playfulness of humour, in good sense and elegant attainments, in modesty and equability of temper, in undeviating integrity, in respect for received and long-established opinions, in serenity, cheerfulness, and urbanity, *the resemblance* must be allowed to be uncommonly striking and exact.

If it should be asked,—amidst so many excellent and amiable qualities, were there no failings? I wish to answer the inquiry in the words of Mr. Burke, who on a paper (blotted with his tears) which has been transmitted to me while these sheets were passing through the press, has written—"I do not know a fault or weakness of his

that he did not convert into something that bordered on a virtue, instead of pushing it to the confines of a vice."

"While I was employed in drawing up an account of our author's life, I requested Mr. Burke to communicate to me his thoughts on the subject; but he was then so ill, that he was able only to set down two or three hints, to be afterwards enlarged on; one of which is that given above. In this paper (which was not found till the former part of these sheets was worked off at the press,) he has noticed our author's disposition to generalize, and his early admiration of Mr. Mudge, which makes part of the subject of his subsequent letter, from which an extract has been given in a former page; but as the observation, as it appears in this fragment, has somewhat of a different shape and colouring, I subjoin it, that no particle of so great a writer may be lost:

"He was a great generalizer, and was fond of reducing every thing to one system, more perhaps than the variety of principles which operate in the human mind and in every human work, will properly endure. But this disposition to abstractions, to generalizing and classification, is the great glory of the human mind, *that* indeed which most distinguishes man from other animals; and is the source of every thing that can be called science. I believe, his early acquaintance with Mr. Mudge of Exeter, a very learned and thinking man, and much inclined to philosophize in the spirit of the Platonists, disposed him to this habit. He certainly by that means liberalized in a high degree the theory of his own art; and if he had been

The detail of his domestick day, however minute or trifling it may appear at present, will, I am confident, at a future period not be unacceptable. He usually rose about eight o'clock, breakfasted at nine, and was in his painting-room before ten. Here he generally employed an hour on some *study*, or on the subordinate parts of whatever portrait happened to be in hand; and from eleven the following five hours were devoted to those who sat for their pictures: with occasionally short intervals, during which he sometimes admitted the visit of a friend. Such was his love of his art, and such his ardour to excel, that he often declared he had during the greater part of his life laboured as hard with his pencil, as any mechanick working at his trade for bread.[55] About two

more methodically instituted in the early part of life, and had possessed more leisure for study and reflection, he would in my opinion have pursued this method with great success."

[55] An observation made by Dr. Johnson on Pope, is extremely applicable to our author, when employed in his

days in the week, during the winter, he dined abroad; once, and sometimes oftner, he had company at home by invitation; and during the remainder of the week he dined with his family, frequently with the addition of two or three friends. It must not be understood that the days of every week were thus regularly distributed by a fixed plan; but this was the general course. In the evenings, when not engaged by the Academy, or in some publick or private assembly, or at the theatre, he was fond of collecting a few friends at home, and joining in a party at whist, which was his favourite game. In consequence of being acquainted with a great variety of persons, he frequently collected a company of seven or eight at dinner, in the morning of the day on which they

painting-room. "He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated into negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault uncorrected by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works, first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it." LIVES OF THE POETS, iv. 163.

met: as the greater part of his friends were men well known in the world, they seldom found themselves unacquainted with each other: and these extemporaneous entertainments were often productive of greater conviviality than more formal and premeditated invitations. The marked character of his table, I think, was, that though there was always an abundant supply of those elegancies which the season afforded, the variety of the courses, the excellence of the dishes, or the flavour of the Burgundy, made the least part of the conversation: though the appetite was gratified by the usual delicacies, and the glass imperceptibly and without solicitation was cheerfully circulated, every thing of this kind appeared secondary and subordinate; and there seemed to be a general, though tacit, agreement among the guests, that *mind* should predominate over *body*; that the honours of the turtle and the haunch should give place to the feast of wit, and that for a redundant flow of wine the flow of soul

should be substituted. Of a table thus constituted, with such a host and such guests, who would not wish to participate?

To enumerate all the eulogies which have been made on our author, would exceed the limits that I have prescribed to myself in this short narrative; but I ought not to omit the testimony borne to his worth by Dr. Johnson, who declared him to be "the most invulnerable man he knew; whom, if he should quarrel with him, he should find the most difficulty how to abuse."[66] Johnson's well-known and rigid adherence to truth on all occasions, gives this encomium great additional value.

He has, however, one claim to praise, which I think it my duty particularly to mention, because otherwise his merit in this respect might perhaps be unknown to future ages; I mean, the praise to which he is en-

[66] Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson;—Dedication.

titled for the rectitude of his judgement concerning those pernicious doctrines, that were made the basis of that Revolution which took place in France not long before his death. Before the publication of Mr. Burke's REFLECTIONS on that subject [57] he had been favoured with a perusal of that incomparable work, and was lavish in his encomiums upon it. He was indeed never weary of expressing his admiration of the profound sagacity which saw, in their embryo state, all the evils with which this country was threatened by that tremendous convulsion; he well knew how eagerly all the wild and erroneous principles of government attempted to be established by the pretended philosophers of France, would be cherished and enforced by those turbulent and unruly spirits among us, whom *no* King *could govern, nor no* GOD *could please*;[58] and

[57] October, 1790.

[58] How justly may we apply the immediately following lines of the same great Poet, to those demagogues

long before that book was written, frequently avowed his contempt of those "Adam-wits," who set at nought the accumulated wisdom of ages, and on all occasions are desirous of beginning the world anew. He did not live to see the accomplishment of almost every one of the predictions of the prophetick and philosophical work alluded to: happily for himself he did not live to participate of the gloom which now saddens every virtuous bosom, in consequence of all the civilised States of Europe being shaken to their foundations by those "*troublers of the*

among us, who since the era above mentioned, have not only on all occasions gratuitously pleaded the cause of the enemies of their country with the zeal of fee'd advocates, but by every other mode incessantly endeavoured to debase and assimilate this *free* and *happy* country to the model of the *ferocious* and *enslaved* Republick of France!

"These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
"Began to dream they wanted liberty;
"And when no rule, no precedent was found
"Of MEN, by laws less circumscribed and bound,
"They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
"And thought that all but SAVAGES were slaves."

poor world's peace," whom Divine Providence has been pleased to make the scourge of human kind. Gloomy as our prospect is (on this account alone,[49]) and great as is the danger with which we are threatened, (I mean *internally*, for as to external violence, we are fully equal to any force which our assailants can bring against us,) I still cherish a hope that the cloud which hangs over us will be dispersed, and that we have *stamina* sufficiently strong to resist the pestilential

[49] I say, on this account *alone*; because in all other respects England is at present in an unparalleled state of wealth and prosperity, though there is a temporary distress occasioned by want of the ordinary circulating medium of commerce. It appears from authentick and indisputable documents, that the trade of England from 1784 to the present time, has *doubled*; and that our Exports in the year 1796 amounted to THIRTY MILLIONS; and it is well known that the rate of the purchase of land, contrary to the experience of all former wars, continues nearly as high as it was in the time of the most profound peace. These facts ought to be sounded from one end of England to the other, and furnish a complete answer to all the SEDITIOUS DECLAMATIONS that have been, or shall be, made on the subject.—[The foregoing observations, as well as those in the text were made in the year 1797.]

contagion suspended in our atmosphere; and my confidence is founded on the good sense and firmness of my countrymen; of whom far the greater part, justly valuing the blessings which they enjoy, will not lightly hazard their loss; and rather than suffer the smallest part of their inestimable Constitution to be changed, or any one of those detestable principles to take root in this soil, which our domestick and foreign enemies with such mischievous industry have endeavoured to propagate, will, I trust, risk every thing that is most dear to man. To be fully apprised of our danger, and to show that we are resolved firmly to meet it, may prove our best security. If, however, at last we must fall, let us fall beneath the ruins of that fabrick, which has been erected by the wisdom and treasure of our ancestors, and which they generously cemented with their blood.

For a very long period Sir Joshua Reynolds enjoyed an uninterrupted state of good

health, to which his custom of painting standing, (a practice which, I believe, he first introduced,) may be supposed in some degree to have contributed; at least by this means he escaped those disorders which are incident to a sedentary life. He was indeed in the year 1782 distressed for a short time by a slight paralytick affection; which, however, made so little impression on him, that in a few weeks he was perfectly restored, and never afterwards suffered any inconvenience from that malady. But in July 1789, when he had very nearly finished the portrait of lady Beauchamp, (now Marchioness of Hertford,) the last female portrait he ever painted,[60] he for the first time perceived his

[60] The last two portraits of gentlemen that he painted, were those of the Right Honourable William Windham, and George J. Cholmondeley, Esq. and they are generally thought to be as finely executed as any he ever painted. In this respect he differed from Titian, whose later productions are esteemed much inferior to his former works. He afterwards attempted to finish the portrait of Lord Macartney, for which that nobleman had sat some time before: but he found himself unable to proceed.

sight so much affected, that he found it difficult to proceed; and in a few months afterwards, in spite of the aid of the most skilful oculists, he was entirely deprived of the sight of his left eye. After some struggles, lest his remaining eye should be also affected, he determined to paint no more: a resolution which to him was a very serious misfortune, since he was thus deprived of an employment that afforded him constant amusement, and which he loved much more for its own sake, than on account of the great emolument with which the practice of his art was attended. Still, however, he retained his usual spirits, was amused by reading, or hearing others read to him, and partook of the society of his friends with the same pleasure as formerly;[61] but in October 1791, having strong

[61] Early in September, 1791, he was in such health and spirits, that in our return to town from Mr. Burke's seat near Beaconsfield, we left his carriage at the inn at Hayes, and walked five miles on the road, in a warm day, without his complaining of any fatigue. He had at that time, though above sixty-eight years of age, the appear-

apprehensions that a tumour accompanied with an inflamation,[62] which took place over the eye that had perished, might affect the other also, he became somewhat dejected. Meanwhile he laboured under a much more dangerous disease, which deprived him both of his wonted spirits and his appetite, though he was wholly unable to explain to his physicians the nature or seat of his disorder. During this period of great affliction to all his friends, his malady was by many supposed to be imaginary: and it was conceived, that, if he would but exert himself, he could shake it off. This instance, however, may serve to show, that the patient best knows what he suffers, and that few long complain of bodily ailments without an inadequate

ance of a man not much beyond fifty, and seemed as likely to live for ten or fifteen years, as any of his younger friends.

[62] This inflammation, after various applications having been tried in vain, was found to have been occasioned by extravasated blood; and had no connection with the optick nerves.

cause; for at length (but not till about a fortnight before his death) the seat of his disorder was found to be in his liver, of which the inordinate growth, as it afterwards appeared,[68] had incommoded all the functions of life; and of this disease, which he bore with the greatest fortitude and patience, he died, after a confinement of near three months, at his house in Leicester-Fields, on Thursday evening, Feb. 23, 1792.

He seemed from the beginning of his illness to have had a presentiment of the fatal termination with which it was finally attended; and therefore considered all those symptoms as delusive, on which the ardent wishes of his friends led them to found a hope of his recovery. He however continued to use all the means of restoration proposed by his

[68] On his body being opened, his liver, which ought to have weighed about five pounds, was found to have increased to an extraordinary size, weighing nearly eleven pounds. It was also somewhat schirrous.

physicians, and for some time to converse daily with his intimate acquaintance; and when he was at length obliged to confine himself to his bed, awaited the hour of his dissolution, (as was observed by one of his friends soon after his death,) with an equanimity rarely shown by the most celebrated Christian philosophers.—On Saturday, the 3d of March, his remains were interred in the crypt of the cathedral of St. Paul, near the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, with every honour that could be shown to genius and to worth by a grateful and enlightened nation; a great number of the most distinguished persons attending the funeral ceremony, and his pall being borne up by three Dukes, two Marquisses, and five other noblemen.[a]

[a] The following account of the ceremonial was written by a friend the day after the funeral, and published in several of the Newspapers.

"On Saturday last, at half an hour after three o'clock was interred the body of S ua Reynolds, Knt. Doc-

Though his friend, Dr. Johnson was buried in Westminster-Abbey, and it had been de-

tor of Laws in the Universities of Oxford and Dublin, Principal Painter to his Majesty, President of the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

"He was interred in the vast crypt of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, next to the body of Dr. Newton, late Bishop of Bristol, himself an eminent critick in Poetry and Painting, and close by the tomb of the famous Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of that great edifice.

"The body was conveyed on the preceding night to the Royal Academy, according to the express orders of his Majesty, by a condescension highly honourable to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and gratifying to the wishes of that Society of eminent Artists. It lay that night, and until the beginning of the funeral procession, in state, in the Model-room of the Academy.

The company who attended the funeral, assembled in the Library and Council-Chamber; the Royal Academy in the Exhibition-Room.

"The company consisted of a great number of the most distinguished persons, who were emulous in their desire of paying the last honours to the remains of him, whose life had been distinguished by the exertions of the highest talents, and the exercise of every virtue that can make a man respected and beloved. Many more were prevented by illness, and unexpected and unavoidable occasions, which they much regretted, from attending.

termined to erect a monument to him there, so desirous, was Sir Joshua Reynolds that St.

"Never was a publick solemnity conducted with more order, decorum, and dignity. The procession set out at half an hour after twelve o'clock. The herse arrived at the great western gate of St. Paul's, about a quarter after two, and was there met by the Dignitaries of the church, and by the gentlemen of the Choir; who chaunted the proper Psalms, whilst the procession moved to the entrance of the choir, where was performed, in a superior manner, the full-choir evening-service, together with the famous anthem of Dr. Boyce; the body remaining during the whole time in the centre of the choir.

"The Chief Mourner and Gentlemen of the Academy, as of the family, were placed by the Body: The Chief Mourner in a chair at the head; the two attendants at the feet; the Pall-Bearers and Executors in the seats on the decanal side; the other Noblemen and gentlemen on the cantorial side. The Bishop of London was in his proper place, as were the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.

"After the service, the body was conveyed into the crypt, and placed immediately beneath the perforated brass-plate, under the centre of the dome. Dr. Jefferies, Canon Residentary, with the other Canons, and the whole Choir, came under the dome; the grave-digger attending in the middle with a shovel of mould, which at the proper time was thrown through the aperture of the plate, on the coffin. The funeral service was chaunted, and accompanied on the organ in a grand and affecting manner. When the funeral service was ended, the

Paul's should be decorated by Sculpture, which he thought would be highly beneficial

Chief Mourners and Executors went into the crypt, and attended the corpse to the grave, which was dug under the pavement.

The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs honoured the procession by coming to Somerset-Place, where an officer's guard of thirty men was placed at the great court-gate. After the procession had passed through Temple-Bar, the gates were shut by order of the Lord Mayor, to prevent any interruption from carriages passing to or from the City.

The spectators, both in the church and in the stre[illegible] were innumerable, The shops were shut, the windo[illegible] of every house were filled, and the people in the street[illegible] who seemed to share in the general sorrow, beheld the whole with respect and silence.

The Order of the Procession was as follows:

The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and City Marshals.

The undertaker and ten conductors, on horseback.

A lid with plumes of feathers.

The HEARSE with six horses.

Ten pall-bearers, viz.

The Duke of Dorset, Lord High Steward of his Majesty's Household.

Duke of Leeds.

Duke of Portland.

Marquis Townshend.

Marquis of Abercorn.

Earl of Carlisle.

to the Arts,[65] that he prevailed on those who were associated with him in the management

Earl of Inchiquin.
Earl of Upper-Ossory,
Lord Viscount Palmerston.
Lord Eliot.
Robert Lovel Gwatkin, Esq. Chief Mourner.
Two Attendants of the Family.
The Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke,
Edmond Malone, Esq. } Executors.
Philip Metcalfe, Esq.
The Royal Academicians and Students.
Bennet Langton, Esq. (Professor in ancient literature.)
James Boswell, Esq. (Secretary for foreign correspondence,)
The Archbishop of York. The Marquis of Buckingham.
Earl of Fife. Earl of Carysfort.
Lord St. Asaph. Lord Bishop of London.
Lord Fortescue. Lord Somers.
Lord Lucan. The Dean of Norwich.
Right Hon. W. Windham. Sir Abraham Hume, Bt.
Sir George Beaumont, Bt. Sir Thomas Dundas, Bt.
Sir Charles Bunbury, Bt. Sir William Forbes, Bt.
Dr. George Fordyce, Dr. Ash.
Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Blagden.
Sir William Scott, M. P. George Rose, Esq. M. P.
John Rolle, Esq. M. P. William Weddell, Esq. M. P.
Reginald Pole Carew, Esq. M. P. Richard Clarke, Esq.
Mat. Montagu, Esq. M. P. Rd. P. Knight, Esq. M. P.
Dudley North, Esq. M. P. Charles Townley, Esq.

of Johnson's monument,[66] to consent that it should be placed in that cathedral; in which,

Abel Moysey, Esq. John Cleveland, Esq, M. P.
John Thomas Batt, Esq. Welbore Ellis Agar, Esq.
Colonel Gwynn, Captain Pole.
Dr. Lawrence, William Seward, Esq.
James Martin, Esq. ——Drewe, Esq.
Edward Jerningham, Esq. William Vachel, Esq.
Richard Burke, Esq. Thomas Coutts, Esq.
John Julius Angerstein, Esq. Edward Gwatkin, Esq.
Charles Burney, Esq. John Hunter, Esq.
William Cruikshank, Esq. ——Home, Esq.
John Philip Kemble, Esq. Joseph Hickey, Esq.
Mr. Alderman Boydell, John Devaynes, Esq.
Mr. Poggi, Mr. Breda.

"The company were conveyed in forty-two mourning coaches; and forty-nine coaches belonging to the Noblemen and Gentlemen attended empty."

To each of the gentlemen who attended on this occasion, was presented a print engraved by Bartolozzi, representing a female clasping an urn; accompanied by the Genius of Painting, holding in one hand an extinguished torch, and pointing with the other to a sarcophagus, on the tablet of which is written—

Succedet famâ, vivusque per ora feretur.

[65] He wished that St. Paul's should be decorated by Paintings as well as Sculpture, and has enlarged on this subject in his "Journey to Flanders," page 341. A scheme of this kind was proposed about the year 1774, and warmly

I know, some of them reluctantly acquiesced. In consequence of the ardour which he expressed on this subject, it was thought proper to deposit his body in the crypt of that magnificent church; which indeed had another claim also to the remains of this great Painter, for in the same ground (though the ancient building constructed upon it has given place to another edifice,) was interred, in the middle of the last century his great predecessor, Sir Antony Vandyck.

By his last will, which was made on the 5th of November preceding his death, he bequeathed the greater part of his fortune to his niece, Miss Palmer, now Dowager Marchioness of Thomond; ten thousand pounds in the funds to her younger sister, Mrs. Gwatkin,

espoused by our Author; but it was prevented from being carried into execution by Dr. Terrick, then Bishop of London. Since that time, *monuments*, under certain regulations, have been admitted.

[66] Sir William Scott, Mr. Burke, Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Windham, Mr. Metcalf, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Malone.

the wife of Robert Lovel Gwatkin, Esq. of Killiow, in the county of Cornwall; a considerable legacy to his friend, the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, with whom he had lived in great intimacy for more than thirty years; and various memorials to other friends.[67]

[67] To the Earl of Upper-Ossory, any picture of his own painting, remaining undisposed of at his death, that his lordship should choose.

To Lord Palmerston, "the second choice."

To Sir Abraham Hume, Bart. "the choice of his Claude Lorraines."

To Sir George Beaumont, Bart. his "Sebastian Bourdon,—the Return of the Arc."

To the Duke of Portland, "the Angel Contemplation —the upper part of the Nativity."

To Edmond Malone, Philip Metcalfe, James Boswell, Esqrs. and Sir William Scott, [now Judge of the Court of Admiralty,] £200 each, to be laid out, if they should think proper, in the purchase of some picture at the sale of his Collection, "to be kept for his sake."

To the Reverend William Mason, "the Miniature of Milton, by Cooper."

To Richard Burke, junior, Esq. his Cromwell, by Cooper.

To Mrs. Bunbury, "her son's picture;" and to Mrs. Gwyn, "her own picture with a turban."

To the brief enumeration that has been given of the various qualities which rendered him at once so distinguished an ornament and so valuable a member of society, it is almost needless to add, that the death of this great Painter, and most amiable man, was not less a private loss, than a publick misfortune; and that however that loss may have been deplored by his numerous friends, by none of them was it more deeply felt, than by him, on whom the office of transmitting to posterity this imperfect memorial of his talents and his virtues has devolved.

To his nephew, William Johnston, Esq. of Calcutta, his watch, &c.

To his old servant, Ralph Kirkley, (who had lived with him twenty-nine years,) one thousand pounds.

Of this Will, he appointed Mr. Burke, Mr. Metcalfe, and the present writer, Executors.

In March, 1795, his fine Collection of Pictures by the Ancient Masters, was sold by Auction for 10,319l. 8s. 6d.; and in April, 1796, various historical and fancy-pieces of his own painting, together with some unclaimed portraits, were sold for 4605l. 18s. His very valuable Collection of Drawings and Prints has been since disposed of.

Its imperfection however will, I trust, be amply compensated by the following characteristick eulogy, in which the hand of the great master, and the affectionate friend, is so visible, that it is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that it was written by Mr. Burke, not many hours after the melancholy event which it commemorates, had taken place:

* * * * * *

"His illness was long, but borne with a "mild and cheerful fortitude, without the "least mixture of any thing irritable, or "querulous, agreeably to the placid and "even tenour of his whole life. He had "from the beginning of his malady, a dis-"tinct view of his dissolution; and he con-"templated it with that entire composure, "which nothing but the innocence, integrity, "and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected "submission to the will of Providence, "could bestow. In this situation he had

" every consolation from family tenderness,
" which his own kindness had indeed well
" deserved.

" Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many
" accounts, one of the most memorable men
" of his time. He was the first English-
" man, who added the praise of the elegant
" arts to the other glories of his country.
" In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy
" invention, and in the richness and harmony
" of colouring, he was equal to the great
" masters of the renowned ages. In Por-
" trait he went beyond them; for he com-
" municated to that description of the art,
" in which English artists are the most en-
" gaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity
" derived from the higher branches, which
" even those who professed them in a su-
" perior manner, did not always preserve,
" when they delineated individual nature.
" His Portraits remind the spectator of the
" invention of history, and the amenity of

" landscape. In painting portraits, he ap-
" peared not to be raised upon that platform,
" but to descend to it from a higher sphere.
" His paintings illustrate his lessons, and
" his lessons seem to be derived from his
" paintings.

" He possessed the theory as perfectly as
" the practice of his art. To be such a
" painter, he was a profound and penetrating
" philosopher.

" In full affluence of foreign and domestick
" fame, admired by the expert in art, and
" by the learned in science, courted by the
" great, caressed by Sovereign Powers, and
" celebrated by distinguished Poets,[69] his

[69] Goldsmith, Mason, T. Warton, &c.—The encomiums on our author in prose, are not less numerous. When the DISCOURSES were mentioned in a former page, I did not recollect that they have been very highly commended by my learned and ingenious friend, Dr. Joseph Warton, one of the few yet left among us, of those who began to be distinguished in the middle of the present

"native humility, modesty, and candour, "never forsook him, even on surprise or "provocation; nor was the least degree of

century, soon after the death of Pope, and may now therefore be considered as the *ultimi Romanorum*. The praise of so judicious a critick being too valuable to be omitted, I shall introduce it here:

"One cannot forbear reflecting on the great progress the Art of Painting has made in this country, since the time that Jervas was thought worthy of this panegyrick: [Pope's Epistle to that Painter, in 1716:] a progress, that, we trust, will daily increase, if due attention be paid to the incomparable Discourses that have been delivered at the Royal Academy; which Discourses contain more solid instruction on that subject, than, I verily think, can be found in any language. The precepts are philosophically founded on truth and nature, and illustrated with the most proper and pertinent examples. The characters are drawn with a *precision* and *distinctness*, that we look for in vain in Felibien, De Piles, and even Vasari, or Pliny himself. Nothing, for example, can be more just and elegant, as well as profound and scientifick, than the comparison between Michael Angelo and Raffaelle in the fifth of these Discourses. Michael Angelo is plainly the hero of Sir Joshua Reynolds, for the same reason that Homer by every great mind is preferred to Virgil." *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, ii. 394.

The foregoing note having been written in 1797, Doctor Warton is spoken of as "yet living." He died Feb. 23, 1800.

" arrogance or assumption visible to the most " scrutinizing eye, in any part of his con- " duct or discourse.

" His talents of every kind, powerful " from nature, and not meanly cultivated by " letters, his social virtues in all the relations " and all the habitudes of life, rendered him " the centre of a very great and unparalleled " variety of agreeable societies, which will " be dissipated by his death. He had too " much merit not to excite some jealousy, " too much innocence to provoke any enmity. " The loss of no man of his time can be felt " with more sincere, general, and unmixed " sorrow.

" HAIL! AND FAREWELL!"

FOLEY-PLACE, March 8, 1809.

[First published in 1797.]

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DISCOURSE I.

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

JANUARY 2, 1769.

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TO

THE MEMBERS

OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

GENTLEMEN,

THAT you have ordered the publication of this discourse, is not only very flattering to me, as it implies your approbation of the method of study which I have recommended; but likewise, as this method receives from that act such an additional weight and authority, as demands from the Students that deference and respect, which

can be due only to the united sense of so considerable a BODY of ARTISTS.

I am,

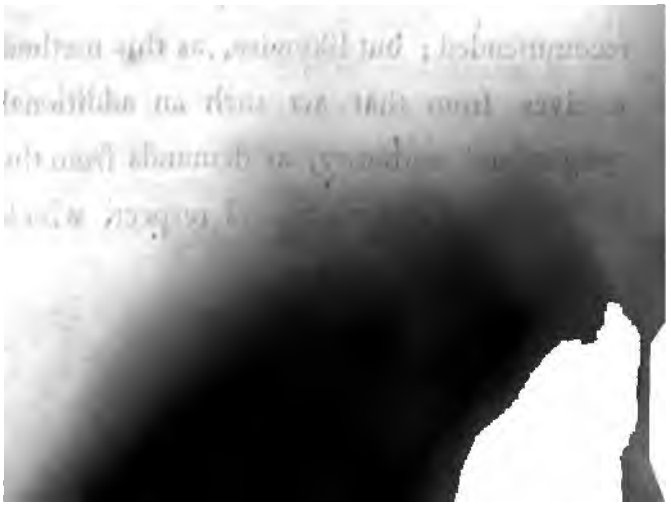
With the greatest esteem and respect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble,

and obedient Servant,

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.



DISCOURSE I.

THE ADVANTAGES PROCEEDING FROM THE INSTITUTION OF A ROYAL ACADEMY.—HINTS OFFERED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PROFESSORS AND VISITORS; —THAT AN IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO THE RULES OF ART BE EXACTED FROM THE YOUNG STUDENTS:—THAT A PREMATURE DISPOSITION TO A MASTERLY DEXTERITY BE REPRESSED;—THAT DILIGENCE BE CONSTANTLY RECOMMENDED, AND (THAT IT MAY BE EFFECTUAL) DIRECTED TO ITS PROPER OBJECT.

GENTLEMEN,

AN Academy, in which the Polite Arts may be regularly cultivated, is at last opened among us by Royal Munificence. This must appear an event in the highest degree interesting, not only to the Artists, but to the whole nation.

It is indeed difficult to give any other reason, why an empire like that of BRITAIN should so long have wanted an ornament so suitable to its greatness, than that slow progression of things, which naturally

makes elegance and refinement the last effect of opulence and power.

An Institution like this has often been recommended upon considerations merely mercantile; but an Academy, founded upon such principles, can never effect even its own narrow purposes. If it has an origin no higher, no taste can ever be formed in manufactures; but if the higher Arts of Design flourish, these inferior ends will be answered of course.

We are happy in having a Prince, who has conceived the design of such an institution, according to its true dignity; and who promotes the Arts, as the head of a great, a learned, a polite, and a commercial nation; and I can now congratulate you, Gentlemen, on the accomplishment of your long and ardent wishes.

The numberless and ineffectual consultations which I have had with many in this assembly to form plans and concert schemes for an Academy, afford a sufficient proof of the impossibility of succeeding but by the influence of MAJESTY. But there have

perhaps, been times, when even the influence of MAJESTY would have been ineffectual; and it is pleasing to reflect, that we are thus embodied, when every circumstance seems to concur from which honour and prosperity can probably arise.

There are, at this time, a greater number of excellent artists than were ever known before at one period in this nation; there is a general desire among our Nobility to be distinguished as lovers and judges of the Arts; there is a greater superfluity of wealth among the people to reward the professors; and, above all, we are patronized by a Monarch, who, knowing the value of science and of elegance, thinks every art worthy of his notice, that tends to soften and humanise the mind.

After so much has been done by HIS MAJESTY, it will be wholly our fault, if our progress is not in some degree correspondent to the wisdom and generosity of the Institution: let us shew our gratitude in our diligence, that, though our merit may not

answer his expectations, yet, at least, our industry may deserve his protection.

But whatever may be our proportion of success, of this we may be sure, that the present Institution will at least contribute to advance our knowledge of the Arts, and bring us nearer to that ideal excellence, which it is the lot of genius always to contemplate and never to attain.

The principal advantage of an Academy is, that, besides furnishing able men to direct the Student, it will be a repository for the great examples of the Art. These are the materials on which Genius is to work, and without which the strongest intellect may be fruitlessly or deviously employed. By studying these authentick models, that idea of excellence which is the result of the accumulated experience of past ages, may be once acquired; and the tardy and obscure progress of our predecessors
a shorter and easier
receives, at one glan
many Artists hav

imbibe somewhat congenial to its own original conceptions. Knowledge, thus obtained, has always something more popular and useful than that which is forced upon the mind by private precepts, or solitary meditation. Besides, it is generally found, that a youth more easily receives instruction from the companions of his studies, whose minds are nearly on a level with his own, than from those who are much his superiors; and it is from his equals only that he catches the fire of emulation.

One advantage, I will venture to affirm, we shall have in our Academy, which no other nation can boast. We shall have nothing to unlearn. To this praise the present race of Artists have a just claim. As far as they have yet proceeded, they are right. With us the exertions of genius will hence-forward be directed to their proper objects. It will not be as it has been in other schools, where he that travelled fastest, only wandered farthest from the right way.

Impressed, as I am, with

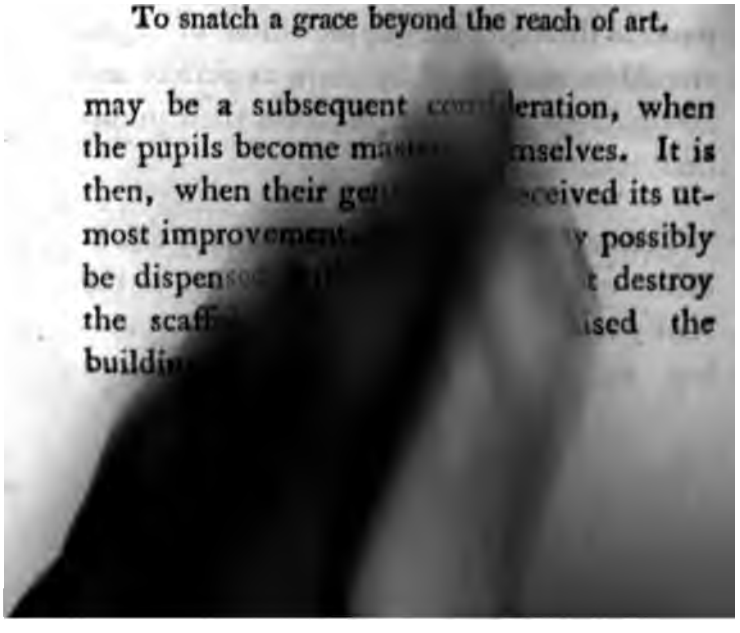
such a favourable opinion of my associates in this undertaking, it would ill become me to dictate to any of them. But as these Institutions have so often failed in other nations; and as it is natural to think with regret, how much might have been done, I must take leave to offer a few hints, by which those errors may be rectified, and those defects supplied. These the Professors and Visitors may reject or adopt as they shall think proper.

I would chiefly recommend, that an implicit obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as established by the practice of the great MASTERS, should be exacted from the *young* Students. That those models, which have passed through the approbation of ages, should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guides; as subjects for their imitation, not their criticism.

I am confident, that this is the only efficacious method of making a progress in the [illegible] and that he who sets out with doubting will find [illegible] finished before he becomes

master of the rudiments. For it may be laid down as a maxim, that he who begins by presuming on his own sense, has ended his studies as soon as he has commenced them. Every opportunity, therefore, should be taken to discountenance that false and vulgar opinion, that rules are the fetters of genius; they are fetters only to men of no genius; as that armour, which upon the strong is an ornament and a defence, upon the weak and mis-shapen becomes a load, and cripples the body which it was made to protect.

How much liberty may be taken to break through those rules, and, as the Poet expresses it,



The Directors ought more particularly to watch over the genius of those Students, who, being more advanced, are arrived at that critical period of study, on the nice management of which their future turn of taste depends. At that age it is natural for them to be more captivated with what is brilliant, than with what is solid, and to prefer splendid negligence to painful and humiliating exactness.

A facility in composing,—a lively, and what is called a masterly, handling of the chalk or pencil, are, it must be confessed, captivating qualities to young minds, and become of course the objects of their ambition. They endeavour to imitate these dazzling excellencies, which they will find no great labour in attaining. After much time spent in these frivolous pursuits, the difficulty will be to retreat; but it will be then too late; and there is scarce an instance of return to [illegible]ulous labour, after the mind has been [illegible]hed and deceived by this fallacious [illegible]y.

By this useless industry they are excluded from all power of advancing in real excellence. Whilst boys, they are arrived at their utmost perfection; they have taken the shadow for the substance; and make the mechanical felicity the chief excellence of the art, which is only an ornament, and of the merit of which few but painters themselves are judges.

This seems to me to be one of the most dangerous sources of corruption; and I speak of it from experience, not as an error which may possibly happen, but which has actually infected all foreign Academies. The directors were probably pleased with this premature dexterity in their pupils, and praised their dispatch at the expence of their correctness.

But young men have not only this frivolous ambition of being thought masters of execution, inciting them on one hand, but also their natural sloth tempting them on the other. They are terrified at the prospect before them, of the toil required to attain

exactness. The impetuosity of youth is disgusted at the slow approaches of a regular siege, and desires, from mere impatience of labour, to take the citadel by storm. They wish to find some shorter path to excellence, and hope to obtain the reward of eminence by other means than those, which the indispensable rules of art have prescribed. They must therefore be told again and again, that labour is the only price of solid fame, and that whatever their force of genius may be, there is no easy method of becoming a good Painter.

When we read the lives of the most eminent Painters, every page informs us, that no part of their time was spent in dissipation. Even an increase of fame served only to augment their industry. To be convinced with what persevering assiduity they pursued their studies, we need only reflect on their method of proceeding in their most celebrated works. When they conceived a subject, they first made a variety of sketches; then a finished drawing of the whole; after that a more correct drawing of every separate part,

—heads, hands, feet, and pieces of drapery; they then painted the picture, and after all re-touched it from the life. The pictures, thus wrought with such pains, now appear like the effect of enchantment, and as if some mighty Genius had struck them off at a blow.

But, whilst diligence is thus recommended to the Students, the Visitors will take care that their diligence be effectual; that it be well directed, and employed on the proper object. A Student is not always advancing because he is employed; he must apply his strength to that part of the art where the real difficulties lie; to that part which distinguishes it as a liberal art; and not by mistaken industry lose his time in that which is merely ornamental. The Students, instead of vying with each other which shall have the readiest hand, should be taught to contend who shall have the purest and most correct out-line; instead of striving which shall produce the brightest tint, or curiously trifling, shall give the gloss of stuffs, so as to appear real, let their ambition be directed to contend, which shall dispose his drapery in the most

graceful folds, which shall give the most grace and dignity to the human figure.

I must beg leave to submit one thing more to the consideration of the Visitors, which appears to me a matter of very great consequence, and the omission of which I think a principal defect in the method of education pursued in all the Academies I have ever visited. The error I mean is, that the students never draw exactly from the living models which they have before them. It is not indeed their intention; nor are they directed to do it. Their drawings resemble the model only in the attitude. They change the form according to their vague and uncertain ideas of beauty, and make a drawing rather of what they think the figure ought to be, than of what it appears. I have thought this the obstacle that has stopped the progress of many young men of real genius; and I very much doubt, whether a habit of drawing correctly what we see, will not give a proportionable power of drawing correctly what we imagine. He who endeavours to copy nicely the figure

before him, not only acquires a habit of exactness and precision, but is continually advancing in his knowledge of the human figure; and though he seems to superficial observers to make a slower progress, he will be found at last capable of adding (without running into capricious wildness) that grace and beauty, which is necessary to be given to his more finished works, and which cannot be got by the moderns, as it was not acquired by the ancients, but by an attentive and well compared study of the human form.

What I think ought to enforce this method is, that it has been the practice (as may be seen by their drawings) of the great Masters in the Art. I will mention a drawing of Raffaelle, *The Dispute of the Sacrament*, the print of which, by Count Cailus, is in every hand. It appears, that he made his sketch from one model; and the habit he had of drawing exactly from the form before him appears by his making all the figures with the same cap, such as his model then happened to wear; so servile a

copyist was this great man, even at a time when he was allowed to be at his highest pitch of excellence.

I have seen also Academy figures by Annibale Caracci, though he was often sufficiently licentious in his finished works, drawn with all the peculiarities of an individual model.

This scrupulous exactness is so contrary to the practice of the Academies, that it is not without great deference, that I beg leave to recommend it to the consideration of the Visitors; and submit to them, whether the neglect of this method is not one of the reasons why Students so often disappoint expectation, and, being more than boys at sixteen, become less than men at thirty.

In short, the method I recommend can only be detrimental where there are but few living forms to copy; for then Students, by always drawing from one alone, will by habit be taught to overlook defects, and mistake deformity for beauty. But of this

there is no danger; since the Council has determined to supply the Academy with a variety of subjects; and indeed those laws which they have drawn up, and which the Secretary will presently read for your confirmation, have in some measure precluded me from saying more upon this occasion. Instead, therefore, of offering my advice, permit me to indulge my wishes, and express my hope, that this institution may answer the expectation of its ROYAL FOUNDER; that the present age may vie in Arts with that of LEO the Tenth; and that *the dignity of the dying Art* (to make use of an expression of Pliny) may be revived under the Reign of GEORGE THE THIRD.

DISCOURSE II.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 11, 1769.

DISCOURSE II.

THE COURSE AND ORDER OF STUDY.—THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF ART.—MUCH COPYING DISCOUNTENANCED.—THE ARTIST AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL PLACES SHOULD BE EMPLOYED IN LAYING UP MATERIALS FOR THE EXERCISE OF HIS ART.

GENTLEMEN,

I Congratulate you on the honour which you have just received. I have the highest opinion of your merits, and could wish to show my sense of them in something which possibly may be more useful to you than barren praise. I could wish to lead you into such a course of study as may render your future progress answerable to your past improvement; and, whilst I applaud you for what has been done, remind you how much yet remains to attain perfection.

I flatter myself, that from the long experience I have had, and the unceasing assiduity with which I have pursued those

studies, in which, like you, I have been engaged, I shall be acquitted of vanity in offering some hints to your consideration. They are indeed in a great degree founded upon my own mistakes in the same pursuit. But the history of errors, properly managed, often shortens the road to truth. And although no method of study, that I can offer, will of itself conduct to excellence, yet it may preserve industry from being misapplied.

In speaking to you of the Theory of the Art, I shall only consider it as it has a relation to the *method* of your studies.

Dividing the study of painting into three distinct periods, I shall address you as having passed through the first of them, which is confined to the rudiments; including a facility of drawing any object that presents itself, a tolerable readiness in the management of colours, and an acquaintance with the most simple and obvious rules of composition.

This first degree of proficiency is, in painting, what grammar is in literature, a

general preparation for whatever species of the art the student may afterwards choose for his more particular application. The power of drawing, modelling, and using colours, is very properly called the Language of the art; and in this language, the honours you have just received prove you to have made no inconsiderable progress.

When the Artist is once enabled to express himself with some degree of correctness, he must then endeavour to collect subjects for expression; to amass a stock of ideas, to be combined and varied as occasion may require. He is now in the second period of study, in which his business is to learn all that has been known and done before his own time. Having hitherto received instructions from a particular master, he is now to consider the Art itself as his master. He must extend his capacity to more sublime and general instructions. Those perfections which he scattered among various masters, are now united in one general idea, which is henceforth to regulate his taste, and enlarge his imagination. With a variety of

models thus before him, he will avoid that narrowness and poverty of conception which attends a bigotted admiration of a single master, and will cease to follow any favourite where he ceases to excel. This period is, however, still a time of subjection and discipline. Though the Student will not resign himself blindly to any single authority, when he may have the advantage of consulting many, he must still be afraid of trusting his own judgment, and of deviating into any track where he cannot find the footsteps of some former master.

The third and last period emancipates the Student from subjection to any authority, but what he shall himself judge to be supported by reason. Confiding now in his own judgment, he will consider and separate those different principles to which different modes of beauty owe their original. In the former period he sought only to know and combine excellence, wherever it was to be found, into one idea of perfection: in this he learns, what requires the most attentive survey, and the most subtle disquisi-

tion, to discriminate perfections that are incompatible with each other.

He is from this time to regard himself as holding the same rank with those masters whom he before obeyed as teachers; and as exercising a sort of sovereignty over those rules which have hitherto restrained him. Comparing now no longer the performances of Art with each other, but examining the Art itself by the standard of nature, he corrects what is erroneous, supplies what is scanty, and adds by his own observation what the industry of his predecessors may have yet left wanting to perfection. Having well established his judgment, and stored his memory, he may now without fear try the power of his imagination. The mind that has been thus disciplined, may be indulged in the warmest enthusiasm, and venture to play on the borders of the wildest extravagance. The habitual dignity which long converse with the greatest minds has imparted to him, will display itself in all his attempts; and he will stand among his instructors, not as an imitator, but a rival.

These are the different stages of the Art. But as I now address myself particularly to those Students who have been this day rewarded for their happy passage through the first period, I can with no propriety suppose they want any help in the initiatory studies. My present design is to direct your view to distant excellence, and to show you the readiest path that leads to it. Of this I shall speak with such latitude, as may leave the province of the professor uninvaded; and shall not anticipate those precepts, which it is his business to give, and your duty to understand.

It is indisputably evident that a great part of every man's life must be employed in collecting materials for the exercise of genius. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory: nothing can come of nothing: he who has laid up no materials, can produce no combinations.

A Student unacquainted with the attempts

of former adventurers, is always apt to over-rate his own abilities; to mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment, and every coast new to him, for a new-found country. If by chance he passes beyond his usual limits, he congratulates his own arrival at those regions which they who have steered a better course have long left behind them.

The productions of such minds are seldom distinguished by an air of originality: they are anticipated in their happiest efforts; and if they are found to differ in any thing from their predecessors, it is only in irregular sallies, and trifling conceits. The more extensive therefore, your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your powers of invention; and what may appear still more like a paradox, the more original will be your conceptions. But the difficulty on this occasion is to determine what ought to be proposed as models of excellence, and who ought to be considered as the properest guides.

To a young man just arrived in Italy, many of the present painters of that country are ready enough to obtrude their precepts, and to offer their own performances as examples of that perfection which they affect to recommend. The Modern, however, who recommends himself as a standard, may justly be suspected as ignorant of the true end, and unacquainted with the proper object, of the art which he professes. To follow such a guide, will not only retard the Student, but mislead him.

On whom then can he rely, or who shall show him the path that leads to excellence? the answer is obvious: those great masters who have travelled the same road with success are the most likely to conduct others. The works of those who have stood the test of ages, have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend. The duration and stability of their fame, is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but bound to the

human heart by every tie of sympathetick approbation.

There is no danger of studying too much the works of those great men; but how they may be studied to advantage is an enquiry of great importance.

Some who have never raised their minds to the consideration of the real dignity of the Art, and who rate the works of an Artist in proportion as they excel or are defective in the mechanical parts, look on theory as something that may enable them to talk but not to paint better; and confining themselves entirely to mechanical practice, very assiduously toil on in the drudgery of copying; and think they make a rapid progress while they faithfully exhibit the minutest part of a favourite picture. This appears to me a very tedious, and I think a very erroneous method of proceeding. Of every large composition, even of those which are most admired, a great part may be truly said to be *common-place*. This, though it takes up much time in copying, conduces little to improvement.

I consider general copying as a delusive kind of industry; the Student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object; as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work: and those powers of invention and composition which ought particularly to be called out, and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise.

How incapable those are of producing any thing of their own, who have spent much of their time in making finished copies, is well known to all who are conversant with our art.

To suppose that the complication of powers, and variety of ideas necessary to that mind which aspires to the first honours in the Art of Painting, can be obtained by the frigid contemplation of a few single models, is no less absurd, than it would be in him who wishes to be a Poet, to imagine that by translating a tragedy he can acquire

to himself sufficient knowledge of the appearances of nature, the operations of the passions, and the incidents of life.

The great use in copying, if it be at all useful, should seem to be in learning to colour; yet even colouring will never be perfectly attained by servilely copying the model before you. An eye critically nice, can only be formed by observing well-coloured pictures with attention: and by close inspection, and minute examination, you will discover, at last, the manner of handling, the artifices of contrast, glazing, and other expedients, by which good colourists have raised the value of their tints, and by which nature has been so happily imitated.

I must inform you, however, that old pictures, deservedly celebrated for their colouring, are often so changed by dirt and varnish, that we ought not to wonder if they do not appear equal to their reputation in the eyes of unexperienced painters, or young students. An artist whose judgment is matured by long observation, con-

siders rather what the picture once was, than what it is at present. He has by habit acquired a power of seeing the brilliancy of tints through the cloud by which it is obscured. An exact imitation, therefore, of those pictures, is likely to fill the student's mind with false opinions; and to send him back a colourist of his own formation, with ideas equally remote from nature and from art, from the genuine practice of the masters, and the real appearances of things.

Following these rules, and using these precautions, when you have clearly and distinctly learned, in what good colouring consists, you cannot do better than have recourse to nature herself, who is always at hand, and in comparison of whose true splendour the best coloured pictures are but faint and feeble.

However, as the practice of copying is not entirely to be excluded, since the mechanical practice of painting is learned in some measure by it, let those choice parts only be selected which have recommended the

work to notice. If its excellence consists in its general effect, it would be proper to make slight sketches of the machinery and general management of the picture. Those sketches should be kept always by you for the regulation of your style. Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions. Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit. Consider with yourself how a Michael Angelo or a Raffaelle would have treated this subject: and work yourself into a belief that your picture is to be seen and criticised by them when completed. Even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers.

But as mere enthusiasm will carry you but a little way, let me recommend a practice that may be equivalent to, and will perhaps more efficaciously contribute to your advancement, than even the verbal corrections of those masters themselves, could they be obtained. What I would propose is, that you should

enter into a kind of competition, by painting a similar subject, and making a companion to any picture that you consider as a model. After you have finished your work, place it near the model, and compare them carefully together. You will then not only see, but feel your own deficiencies more sensibly than by precepts, or any other means of instruction. The true principles of painting will mingle with your thoughts. Ideas thus fixed by sensible objects, will be certain and definitive; and sinking deep into the mind, will not only be more just, but more lasting than those presented to you by precepts only; which will always be fleeting, variable, and undetermined.

This method of comparing your own efforts with those of some great master, is indeed a severe and mortifying task, to which none will submit, but such as have great views, with fortitude sufficient to forego the gratifications of present vanity for future honour. When the Student has succeeded in some measure to his own satisfaction, and has felicitated himself on his success, to go volun-

tarily to a tribunal where he knows his vanity must be humbled, and all self-approbation must vanish, requires not only great resolution, but great humility. To him, however, who has the ambition to be a real master, the solid satisfaction which proceeds from a consciousness of his advancement, (of which seeing his own faults is the first step,) will very abundantly compensate for the mortification of present disappointment. There is, besides, this alleviating circumstance. Every discovery he makes, every acquisition of knowledge he attains, seems to proceed from his own sagacity; and thus he acquires a confidence in himself sufficient to keep up the resolution of perseverance.

We all must have experienced how lazily, and consequently how ineffectually, instruction is received when forced upon the mind by others. Few have been taught to any purpose, who have not been their own teachers. We prefer those instructions which we have given ourselves, from our affection to the instructor; and they are more effectual, from being received into the mind at the very

time when it is most open and eager to receive them.

With respect to the pictures that you are to choose for your models, I could wish that you would take the world's opinion rather than your own. In other words, I would have you choose those of established reputation, rather than follow your own fancy. If you should not admire them at first, you will, by endeavouring to imitate them, find that the world has not been mistaken.

It is not an easy task to point out those various excellencies for your imitation, which lie distributed amongst the various schools. An endeavour to do this may perhaps be the subject of some future discourse. I will, therefore, at present only recommend a model for style in Painting, which is a branch of the art more immediately necessary to the young student. Style in painting is the same as in writing, a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions or sentiments are conveyed. And in this Ludovico Caracci (I mean in his best works)

appears to me to approach the nearest to perfection. His unaffected breadth of light and shadow, the simplicity of colouring, which, holding its proper rank, does not draw aside the least part of the attention from the subject, and the solemn effect of that twilight which seems diffused over his pictures, appear to me to correspond with grave and dignified subjects, better than the more artificial brilliancy of sunshine which enlightens the pictures of Titian: though Tintoret thought that Titian's colouring was the model of perfection, and would correspond even with the sublime of Michael Angelo; and that if Angelo had coloured like Titian, or Titian designed like Angelo, the world would once have had a perfect painter.

It is our misfortune, however, that those works of Caracci which I would recommend to the Student, are not often found out of Bologna. The *St. Francis in the midst of his Friars*, *The Transfiguration*, *The Birth of St. John the Baptist*, *The Calling of St. Matthew*, *The St. Jerome*, *The Fresco Paintings* in the Zampieri palace, are all worthy the

attention of the student. And I think those who travel would do well to allot a much greater portion of their time to that city, than it has been hitherto the custom to bestow.

In this art, as in others, there are many teachers who profess to show the nearest way to excellence; and many expedients have been invented by which the toil of study might be saved. But let no man be seduced to idleness by specious promises. Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labour. It argues indeed no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving those advances; which, like the hand of a clock, whilst they make hourly approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation. A facility of drawing, like that of playing upon a musical instrument, cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts. I need not, therefore, enforce by many words the necessity of continual application; nor tell you that the port-crayon ought to be for ever in your hands. Various methods will occur to you by which this

power may be acquired. I would particularly recommend, that after your return from the Academy, (where I suppose your attendance to be constant,) you would endeavour to draw the figure by memory. I will even venture to add, that by perseverance in this custom, you will become able to draw the human figure tolerably correct, with as little effort of the mind as is required to trace with a pen the letters of the alphabet.

That this facility is not unattainable, some members in this Academy give a sufficient proof. And be assured, that if this power is not acquired whilst you are young, there will be no time for it afterwards: at least the attempt will be attended with as much difficulty as those experience, who learn to read or write after they have arrived to the age of maturity.

But while I mention the port-crayon as the student's constant companion, he must still remember, that the pencil is the instrument by which he must hope to obtain eminence. What, therefore, I wish to impress upon you

is, that whenever an opportunity offers, you paint your studies instead of drawing them. This will give you such a facility in using colours, that in time they will arrange themselves under the pencil, even without the attention of the hand that conducts it. If one act excluded the other, this advice could not with any propriety be given. But if Painting comprises both drawing and colouring, and if by a short struggle of resolute industry, the same expedition is attainable in Painting as in drawing on paper, I cannot see what objection can justly be made to the practice; or why that should be done by parts, which may be done all together.

If we turn our eyes to the several Schools of Painting, and consider their respective excellencies, we shall find that those who excel most in colouring, pursued this method. The Venetian and Flemish schools, which owe much of their fame to colouring, have enriched the cabinets of the collectors of drawings, with very few examples. Those of Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and the Bassans, are in general slight and undeter-

mined. Their sketches on paper are as rude as their pictures are excellent in regard to harmony of colouring. Correggio and Baroccio have left few, if any finished drawings behind them. And in the Flemish school, Rubens and Vandyck made their designs for the most part either in colours, or in chiaro-oscuro. It is as common to find studies of the Venetian and Flemish Painters on canvass, as of the schools of Rome and Florence on paper. Not but that many finished drawings are sold under the names of those masters. Those, however, are undoubtedly the productions either of engravers or their scholars, who copied their works.

These instructions I have ventured to offer from my own experience; but as they deviate widely from received opinions, I offer them with diffidence; and when better are suggested, shall retract them without regret.

There is one precept, however, in which I shall only be opposed by the vain, the ignorant, and the idle. I am not afraid that I shall repeat it too often. You must have no

dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour: nothing is to be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature or essence of genius, I will venture to assert, that assiduity unabated by difficulty, and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of its pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of *natural powers*.

Though a man cannot at all times, and in all places, paint or draw, yet the mind can prepare itself by laying in proper materials, at all times, and in all places. Both Livy and Plutarch, in describing Philopoemen, one of the ablest generals of antiquity, have given us a striking picture of a mind always intent on its profession, and by assiduity obtaining those excellencies which some all their lives vainly expect from nature. I shall quote the passage in Livy at length, as it runs parallel with the practice I would re-

commend to the Painter, Sculptor, and Architect.

" Philopoemen was a man eminent for his sagacity and experience in choosing ground, and in leading armies; to which he formed his mind by perpetual meditation, in times of peace as well as war. When, in any occasional journey, he came to a strait difficult passage, if he was alone, he considered with himself, and if he was in company he asked his friends, what it would be best to do if in this place they had found an enemy, either in the front, or in the rear, on the one side or on the other. ' It might happen,' says he, ' that the enemy to be opposed might come on drawn up in regular lines, or in a tumultuous body, formed only by the nature of the place.' He then considered a little what ground he should take; what number of soldiers he should use, and what arms he should give them; where he should lodge his carriages, his baggage, and the defenceless followers of his camp; how many guards, and of what kind, he should send to defend them; and whether it would

be better to press forward along the pass, or recover by retreat his former station: he would consider likewise where his camp could most commodiously be formed; how much ground he should inclose within his trenches; where he should have the convenience of water, and where he might find plenty of wood and forage; and when he should break up his camp on the following day, through what road he could most safely pass, and in what form he should dispose his troops. With such thoughts and disquisitions he had from his early years so exercised his mind, that on these occasions nothing could happen which he had not been already accustomed to consider.

I cannot help imagining that I see a promising young painter equally vigilant, whether at home, or abroad, in the streets, or in the fields. Every object that presents itself, is to him a lesson. He regards all Nature with a view to his profession; and combines her beauties, or corrects her defects. He examines the countenance of men under the influence of passion;

and often catches the most pleasing hints from subjects of turbulence or deformity. Even bad pictures themselves supply him with useful documents; and, as Lionardo da Vinci has observed, he improves upon the fanciful images that are sometimes seen in the fire, or are accidentally sketched upon a discoloured wall.

The Artist who has his mind thus filled with ideas, and his hand made expert by practice, works with ease and readiness; whilst he who would have you believe that he is waiting for the inspirations of Genius, is in reality at a loss how to begin; and is at last delivered of his monsters, with difficulty and pain.

The well-grounded painter, on the contrary, has only maturely to consider his subject, and all the mechanical parts of his art follow without his exertion. Conscious of the difficulty of obtaining what he possesses, he makes no pretensions to secrets, except those of closer application. Without conceiving the smallest jealousy against

others he is contented that all shall be as great as himself, who have undergone the same fatigue; and as his pre-eminence depends not upon a trick, he is free from the painful suspicions of a juggler, who lives in perpetual fear lest his trick should be discovered.

DISCOURSE III.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 14, 1770.

DISCOURSE III.

THE GREAT LEADING PRINCIPLES OF THE GRAND STYLE.—OF BEAUTY.—THE GENUINE HABITS OF NATURE TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THOSE OF FASHION.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is not easy to speak with propriety to so many students of different ages and different degrees of advancement. The mind requires nourishment adapted to its growth; and what may have promoted our earlier efforts, might retard us in our nearer approaches to perfection.

The first endeavours of a young Painter, as I have remarked in a former discourse, must be employed in the attainment of mechanical dexterity, and confined to the mere imitation of the object before him. Those who have advanced beyond the rudiments, may, perhaps, find advantage in reflecting on the advice which I have likewise given

them, when I recommended the diligent study of the works of our great predecessors; but I at the same time endeavoured to guard them against an implicit submission to the authority of any one master however excellent: or by a strict imitation of his manner, precluding themselves from the abundance and variety of Nature. I will now add, that Nature herself is not to be too closely copied. There are excellencies in the art of painting beyond what is commonly called the imitation of nature; and these excellencies I wish to point out. The students who, having passed through the initiatory exercises, are more advanced in the art, and who, sure of their hand, have leisure to exert their understanding, must now be told, that a mere copier of nature can never produce any thing great, can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator.

The wish of the genuine painter must be more extensive: instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavour to im-

prove them by the grandeur of his ideas; instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame, by captivating the imagination.

The principle now laid down, that the perfection of this art does not consist in mere imitation, is far from being new or singular. It is, indeed, supported by the general opinion of the enlightened part of mankind. The poets, orators, and rhetoricians of antiquity, are continually enforcing this position; that all the arts receive their perfection from an ideal beauty, superior to what is to be found in individual nature. They are ever referring to the practice of the painters and sculptors of their times, particularly Phidias, (the favourite artist of antiquity,) to illustrate their assertions. As if they could not sufficiently express their admiration of his genius by what they knew, they have recourse to poetical enthusiasm: they call it inspiration; a gift from heaven. The artist is supposed to have ascended the celestial regions, to furnish his mind with this perfect idea of beauty.

"He," says Proclus *, "who takes for his "model such forms as nature produces, and "confines himself to an exact imitation of "them, will never attain to what is perfectly "beautiful. For the works of nature are full "of disproportion, and fall very short of the "true standard of beauty. So that Phidias, "when he formed his Jupiter, did not copy "any object ever presented to his sight; but "contemplated only that image which he "had conceived in his mind from Homer's "description." And thus Cicero, speaking of the same Phidias: "Neither did this "artist," says he, "when he carved the "image of Jupiter or Minerva, set before "him any one human figure, as a pattern, "which he was to copy; but having a "more perfect idea of beauty fixed in his "mind, this he steadily contemplated, and "to the imitation of this, all his skill and "labour were directed."

The Moderns are not less convinced than the Ancients of this superior power existing in the art; nor less sensible of its effects,

* Lib. 2. in Timæum Platonis, as cited by Junius de Pictura Veterum. R.

Every language has adopted terms expressive of this excellence. The *gusto grande* of the Italians, the *beau ideal* of the French, and the *great style*, *genius*, and *taste* among the English, are but different appellations of the same thing. It is this intellectual dignity, they say, that ennobles the painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanick; and produces those great effects in an instant, which eloquence and poetry, by slow and repeated efforts, are scarcely able to attain.

Such is the warmth with which both the Ancients and Moderns speak of this divine principle of the art; but, as I have formerly observed, enthusiastick admiration seldom promotes knowledge. Though a student by such praise may have his attention roused, and a desire excited, of running in this great career; yet it is possible that what has been said to excite, may only serve to deter him. He examines his own mind, and perceives there nothing of that divine inspiration, with which he is told so many others have been favoured. He never tra-

velled to heaven to gather new ideas; and he finds himself possessed of no other qualifications than what mere common observation and a plain understanding can confer. Thus he becomes gloomy amidst the splendour of figurative declamation, and thinks it hopeless to pursue an object which he supposes out of the reach of human industry.

But on this, as upon many other occasions, we ought to distinguish how much is to be given to enthusiasm, and how much to reason. We ought to allow for, and we ought to commend that strength of vivid expression, which is necessary to convey, in its full force, the highest sense of the most complete effect of art; taking care at the same time, not to lose in terms of vague admiration, that solidity and truth of principle, upon which alone we can reason, and may be enabled to practise.

It is not easy to define in what this great style consists; nor to describe, by words, the proper means of acquiring it, if the mind of the student should be at all capable

of such an acquisition. Could we teach taste or genius by rules, they would be no longer taste and genius. But though there neither are, nor can be, any precise invariable rules for the exercise, or the acquisition, of these great qualities, yet we may truly say, that they always operate in proportion to our attention in observing the works of nature, to our skill in selecting, and to our care in digesting, methodizing, and comparing our observations. There are many beauties in our art, that seem, at first, to lie without the reach of precept, and yet may easily be reduced to practical principles. Experience is all in all; but it is not every one who profits by experience; and most people err, not so much from want of capacity to find their object, as from not knowing what object to pursue. This great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us. But the power of discovering what is deformed in nature, or in other words, what is particular and uncommon, can be acquired only by experience; and the whole beauty and grandeur

of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.

All the objects which are exhibited to our view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects. The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives these blemishes. It must be an eye long used to the contemplation and comparison of these forms; and which by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, has acquired the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the painter, who aims at the greatest style. By this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms

more perfect than any one original; and what may seem a paradox, he learns to design naturally by drawing his figures unlike to any one object. This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the Artist calls the Ideal Beauty, is the great leading principle by which works of genius are conducted. By this Phidias acquired his fame. He wrought upon a sober principle what has so much excited the enthusiasm of the world; and by this method you, who have courage to tread the same path, may acquire equal reputation.

This is the idea which has acquired, and which seems to have a right to the epithet of *divine*; as it may be said to preside, like a supreme judge, over all the productions of nature appearing to be possessed of the will and intention of the Creator, as far as they regard the external form of living beings. When a man once possesses this idea in its perfection, there is no danger but that he will be sufficiently warmed by it himself, and be able to warm and enrich every one else.

Thus it is from a reiterated experience, and a close comparison of the objects in nature, that an artist becomes possessed of the idea of that central form, if I may so express it, from which every deviation is deformity. But the investigation of this form, I grant, is painful, and I know but of one method of shortening the road; this is, by a careful study of the works of the ancient sculptors; who, being indefatigable in the school of nature, have left models of that perfect form behind them, which an artist would prefer as supremely beautiful, who had spent his whole life in that single contemplation. But if industry carried them thus far, may not you also hope for the same reward from the same labour? we have the same school opened to us, that was opened to them; for nature denies her instructions to none, who desire to become her pupils.

This laborious investigation, I am aware, must appear superfluous to those who think every thing is to be done by felicity, and the powers of native genius. Even the

great Bacon treats with ridicule the idea of confining proportion to rules, or of producing beauty by selection. "A man cannot "tell, (says he,) whether Apelles or Albert "Durer were the more trifler: whereof the "one would make a personage by geome- "trical proportions; the other, by taking "the best parts out of divers faces, to make "one excellent. . . . . The painter, (he "adds,) must do it by a kind of felicity, ". . . and not by rule*."

It is not safe to question any opinion of so great a writer, and so profound a thinker, as undoubtedly Bacon was. But he studies brevity to excess; and therefore his meaning is sometimes doubtful. If he means that beauty has nothing to do with rule, he is mistaken. There is a rule, obtained out of general nature, to contradict which is to fall into deformity. Whenever any thing is done beyond this rule, it is in virtue of some other rule which

* Essays, p. 252. edit. 1625.

is followed along with it, but which does not contradict it. Every thing which is wrought with certainty, is wrought upon some principle. If it is not, it cannot be repeated. If by felicity is meant any thing of chance or hazard, or something born with a man, and not earned, I cannot agree with this great philosopher. Every object which pleases must give us pleasure upon some certain principles: but as the objects of pleasure are almost infinite, so their principles vary without end, and every man finds them out, not by felicity or successful hazard, but by care and sagacity.

To the principle I have laid down, that the idea of beauty in each species of beings is an invariable one, it may be objected, that in every particular species there are various central forms, which are separate and distinct from each other, and yet are undeniably beautiful; that in the human figure, for instance, the beauty of Hercules is one, of the Gladiator another, of the Apollo another; which makes so many different ideas of beauty.

It is true, indeed, that these figures are each perfect in their kind, though of different characters and proportions; but still none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class. And as there is one general form, which, as I have said, belongs to the human kind at large, so in each of these classes there is one common idea and central form, which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to that class. Thus, though the forms of childhood and age differ exceedingly, there is a common form in childhood, and a common form in age, which is the more perfect, as it is more remote from all peculiarities. But I must add further, that though the most perfect forms of each of the general divisions of the human figure are ideal, and superior to any individual form of that class; yet the highest perfection of the human figure is not to be found in any one of them. It is not in the Hercules, nor in the Gladiator, nor in the Apollo; but in that form which is taken from all, and which partakes equally of the activity of the Gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the

muscular strength of the Hercules. For perfect beauty in any species must combine all the characters which are beautiful in that species. It cannot consist in any one to the exclusion of the rest: no one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient.

The knowledge of these different characters, and the power of separating and distinguishing them, is undoubtedly necessary to the painter, who is to vary his compositions with figures of various forms and proportions, though he is never to lose sight of the general idea of perfection in each kind.

There is, likewise, a kind of symmetry, or proportion, which may properly be said to belong to deformity. A figure lean or corpulent, tall or short, though deviating from beauty, may still have a certain union of the various parts, which may contribute to make them on the whole not unpleasing.

When the Artist has by diligent attention

acquired a clear and distinct idea of beauty and symmetry; when he has reduced the variety of nature to the abstract idea; his next task will be to become acquainted with the genuine habits of nature, as distinguished from those of fashion. For in the same manner, and on the same principles, as he has acquired the knowledge of the real forms of nature, distinct from accidental deformity, he must endeavour to separate simple chaste nature, from those adventitious, those affected and forced airs or actions, with which she is loaded by modern education.

Perhaps I cannot better explain what I mean, than by reminding you of what was taught us by the Professor of Anatomy, in respect to the natural position and movement of the feet. He observed, that the fashion of turning them outwards was contrary to the intent of nature, as might be seen from the structure of the bones, and from the weakness that proceeded from that manner of standing. To this we may add the erect position of the head, the projection of the chest, the walking with straight knees, and

many such actions, which we know to be merely the result of fashion, and what nature never warranted, as we are sure that we have been taught them when children.

I have mentioned but a few of those instances, in which vanity or caprice have contrived to distort and disfigure the human form; your own recollection will add to these a thousand more of ill-understood methods, which have been practised to disguise nature among our dancing-masters, hair-dressers, and tailors, in their various schools of deformity*.

However the mechanick and ornamental arts may sacrifice to fashion, she must be entirely excluded from the Art of Painting; the painter must never mistake this capricious changeling for the genuine offspring of

* "Those," says Quintilian, "who are [illegible]
"the outward show of things.
"beauty in persons, who
"painted, than uncorrupt
"were merely the effec
"ners." R.

nature; he must divest himself of all prejudices in favour of his age or country; he must disregard all local and temporary ornaments, and look only on those general habits which are every where and always the same, he addresses his works to the people of every country and every age, he calls upon posterity to be his spectators, and says with Zeuxis, *in æternitatem pingo.*

The neglect of separating modern fashions from the habits of nature, leads to that ridiculous style which has been practised by some painters, who have given to Grecian Heroes the airs and graces practised in the court of Lewis the Fourteenth; an absurdity almost as great as it would have been to have dressed them after the fashion of that court.

To avoid this error, however, and to retain the true simplicity of nature, is a task more difficult than at first sight it may appear. The prejudices in favour of the fashions and customs that we have been used to, and which are justly called a second

nature, make it too often difficult to dis guish that which is natural from that wl is the result of education; they freque even give a predilection in favour of the ficial mode; and almost every one is ap be guided by those local prejudices, who not chastised his mind, and regulated instability of his affections by the ete invariable idea of nature.

Here then, as before, we must have course to the Ancients as instructors. I from a careful study of their works that will be enabled to attain to the real simpli of nature; they will suggest many obser tions, which would probably escape you, your study were confined to nature alo And, indeed, I cannot help suspecting, t in this instance the ancients had an easier t than the moderns. They had, probab little or nothing to unlearn, as their mann were nearly approaching to this desira simplicity; while the modern artist, bef he can see the truth of things, is obliged remove a veil, with which the fashion of times has thought proper to cover her.

Having gone thus far in our investigation of the great style in painting; if we now should suppose that the artist has found the true idea of beauty, which enables him to give his works a correct and perfect design; if we should suppose also, that he has acquired a knowledge of the unadulterated habits of nature; which gives him simplicity; the rest of his task is, perhaps, less than is generally imagined. Beauty and simplicity have so great a share in the composition of a great style, that he who has acquired them has little else to learn. It must not, indeed, be forgotten, that there is a nobleness of conception, which goes beyond any thing in the mere exhibition even of perfect form; there is an art of animating and dignifying the figures with intellectual grandeur, of impressing the appearance of philosophick wisdom, or heroic virtue. This can only be acquired by him that enlarges the sphere of his understanding by a variety of knowledge, and warms his imagination with the best productions of ancient and modern poetry.

A hand thus exercised, and a mind thus instructed, will bring the art to a higher degree of excellence than, perhaps, it has hitherto attained in this country. Such a student will disdain the humbler walks of painting, which, however profitable, can never assure him a permanent reputation. He will leave the meaner artist servilely to suppose that those are the best pictures, which are most likely to deceive the spectator. He will permit the lower painter, like the florist or collector of shells, to exhibit the minute discriminations, which distinguish one object of the same species from another; while he, like the philosopher, will consider nature in the abstract, and represent in every one of his figures the character of its species.

If deceiving the eye were the only business of the art, there is no doubt, indeed, but the minute painter would be more apt to succeed; but it is not the eye, it is the mind, which the painter of genius desires to address; nor will he waste a moment upon those smaller objects, which only serve to catch

the sense, to divide the attention, and to counteract his great design of speaking to the heart.

This is the ambition which I wish to excite in your minds; and the object I have had in my view, throughout this discourse, is that one great idea which gives to painting its true dignity, which entitles it to the name of a Liberal Art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry.

It may possibly have happened to many young students, whose application was sufficient to overcome all difficulties, and whose minds were capable of embracing the most extensive views, that they have, by a wrong direction originally given, spent their lives in the meaner walks of painting, without ever knowing there was a nobler to pursue. Albert Durer, as Vasari has justly remarked, would, probably have been one of the first painters of his age, (and he lived in an era of great artists,) had he been initiated into those great principles of the art, which were so well understood and practised by his contem-

poraries in Italy. But unluckily having never seen or heard of any other manner, he, without doubt, considered his own as perfect.

As for the various departments of painting, which do not presume to make such high pretensions, they are many. None of them are without their merit, though none enter into competition with this universal presiding idea of the art. The painters who have applied themselves more particularly to low and vulgar characters, and who express with precision the various shades of passion, as they are exhibited by vulgar minds, (such as we see in the works of Hogarth,) deserve great praise; but as their genius has been employed on low and confined subjects, the praise which we give must be as limited as its object. The merry-making, or quarrelling of the Boors of Teniers; the same sort of productions of Brouwer, or Ostade, are excellent in their kind; and the excellence and its praise will be in proportion, as, in those limited subjects, and peculiar forms, they introduce more or less of the expression of [redacted] passions, as they

enlarged nature. This principle may be applied to the Battle-pieces of Bourgognone, the French Gallantries of Watteau, and even beyond the exhibition of animal life, to the Landscapes of Claude Lorraine, and the Sea-Views of Vandervelde. All these painters have, in general, the same right, in different degrees, to the name of a painter, which a satirist, an epigrammatist, a sonneteer, a writer of pastorals, or descriptive poetry, has to that of a poet.

In the same rank, and perhaps of not so great merit, is the cold painter of portraits. But his correct and just imitation of his object has its merit. Even the painter of still life, whose highest ambition is to give a minute representation of every part of those low objects which he sets before him, deserves praise in proportion to his attainment; because no part of this excellent art, so much the ornament of polished life, is destitute of value and use. These, however, are by no means the views to which the mind of the student ought to be *primarily* directed. Having begun by aiming at better things, if from

particular inclination, or from the taste of the time and place he lives in, or from necessity, or from failure in the highest attempts, he is obliged to descend lower, he will bring into the lower sphere of art a grandeur of composition and character, that will raise and ennoble his works far above their natural rank.

A man is not weak, though he may not be able to wield the club of Hercules; nor does a man always practise that which he esteems the best; but does that which he can best do. In moderate attempts, there are many walks open to the artist. But as the idea of beauty is of necessity but one, so there can be but one great mode of painting; the leading principle of which I have endeavoured to explain.

I should be sorry, if what is here recommended, should be at all understood to countenance a careless or undetermined manner of painting. For though the painter is to overlook the accidental discriminations of nature, he is to exhibit distinctly, and with precision,

the general forms of things. A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style in painting; and let me add, that he who possesses the knowledge of the exact form which every part of nature ought to have, will be fond of expressing that knowledge with correctness and precision in all his works.

To conclude; I have endeavoured to reduce the idea of beauty to general principles: and I had the pleasure to observe that the Professor of Painting proceeded in the same method, when he showed you that the artifice of contrast was founded but on one principle. I am convinced that this is the only means of advancing science; of clearing the mind from a confused heap of contradictory observations, that do but perplex and puzzle the student, when he compares them, or misguide him if he gives himself up to their authority; bringing them under one general head, can alone give rest and satisfaction to an inquisitive mind.

DISCOURSE IV.

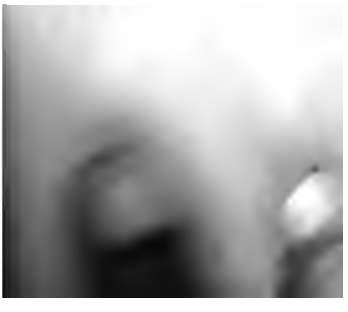
DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1771.



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DISCOURSE IV.

GENERAL IDEAS, THE PRESIDING PRINCIPLE WHICH REGULATES EVERY PART OF ART; INVENTION, EXPRESSION, COLOURING, AND DRAPERY.—TWO DISTINCT STYLES IN HISTORY-PAINTING; THE GRAND, AND THE ORNAMENTAL.—THE SCHOOLS IN WHICH EACH IS TO BE FOUND.—THE COMPOSITE STYLE.—THE STYLE FORMED ON LOCAL CUSTOMS AND HABITS, OR A PARTIAL VIEW OF NATURE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it. As this principle is observed or neglected, our profession becomes either a liberal art, or a mechanical trade. In the hands of one man it makes the highest pretensions, as it is addressed to the noblest faculties: in those of another it is reduced to a mere matter of ornament; and the painter has but the humble province of furnishing our apartments with elegance.

This exertion of mind, which is the only circumstance that truly ennobles our Art, makes the great distinction between the Roman and Venetian schools. I have formerly observed that perfect form is produced by leaving out particularities, and retaining only general ideas: I shall now endeavour to show that this principle, which I have proved to be metaphysically just, extends itself to every part of the Art; that it gives what is called the *grand style*, to Invention, to Composition, to Expression, and even to Colouring and Drapery.

Invention in Painting does not imply the invention of the subject; for that is commonly supplied by the Poet or Historian. With respect to the choice, no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting. It ought to be either some eminent instance of heroick action, or heroick suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the publick sympathy.

Strictly speaking, indeed, no subject can

be of universal, hardly can it be of general, concern; but there are events and characters so popularly known in those countries where our Art is in request, that they may be considered as sufficiently general for all our purposes. Such are the great events of Greek and Roman fable and history, which early education, and the usual course of reading, have made familiar and interesting to all Europe, without being degraded by the vulgarism of ordinary life in any country. Such too are the capital subjects of scripture history, which, beside their general notoriety, become venerable by their connection with our religion.

As it is required that the subject selected should be a general one, it is no less necessary that it should be kept unembarrassed with whatever may any way serve to divide the attention of the spectator. Whenever a story is related, every man forms a picture in his mind of the action and expression of the persons employed. The power of representing this mental picture on canvass is what we call invention in a Painter. And

as in the conception of this ideal picture, the mind does not enter into the minute peculiarities of the dress, furniture, or scene of action; so when the Painter comes to represent it, he contrives those little necessary concomitant circumstances in such a manner, that they shall strike the spectator no more than they did himself in his first conception of the story.

I am very ready to allow, that some circumstances of minuteness and particularity frequently tend to give an air of truth to a piece, and to interest the spectator in an extraordinary manner. Such circumstances therefore cannot wholly be rejected: but if there be any thing in the Art which requires peculiar nicety of discernment, it is the disposition of these minute circumstantial parts; which, according to the judgement employed in the choice, become so useful to truth, or so injurious to grandeur.

However, the usual and most dangerous error is on the side of minuteness; and therefore I think caution most necessary where most have failed. The general idea consti-

tutes real excellence. All smaller things, however perfect in their way, are to be sacrificed without mercy to the greater. The Painter will not inquire what things may be admitted without much censure: he will not think it enough to show that they may be there; he will show that they must be there; that their absence would render his picture maimed and defective.

Thus, though to the principal group a second or third be added, and a second and third mass of light, care must be taken that these subordinate actions and lights, neither each in particular, nor all together, come into any degree of competition with the principal: they should merely make a part of that whole which would be imperfect without them. To every kind of painting this rule may be applied. Even in portraits, the grace, and, we may add, the likeness, consists more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature.

Thus figures must have a ground where-

on to stand; they must be cloathed: there must be a back-ground; there must be light and shadow; but none of these ought to appear to have taken up any part of the artist's attention. They should be so managed as not even to catch that of the spectator. We know well enough, when we analyze a piece, the difficulty and the subtilty with which an artist adjusts the back-ground, drapery, and masses of light; we know that a considerable part of the grace and effect of his picture depends upon them; but this art is so much concealed, even to a judicious eye, that no remains of any of these subordinate parts occur to the memory when the picture is not present.

The great end of the art is to strike the imagination. The Painter therefore is to make no ostentation of the means by which this is done; the spectator is only to feel the result in his bosom. An inferior artist is unwilling that any part of his industry should be lost upon the spectator. He takes as much pains to discover, as the greater artist does to conceal, the marks of his subor-

dinate assiduity. In works of the lower kind, every thing appears studied, and encumbered; it is all boastful art, and open affectation. The ignorant often part from such pictures with wonder in their mouths, and indifference in their hearts.

But it is not enough in Invention that the Artist should restrain and keep under all the inferior parts of his subject; he must sometimes deviate from vulgar and strict historical truth, in pursuing the grandeur of his design.

How much the great style exacts from its professors to conceive and represent their subjects in a poetical manner, not confined to mere matter of fact, may be seen in the Cartoons of Raffaelle. In all the pictures in which the painter has represented the apostles, he has drawn them with great nobleness; he has given them as much dignity as the human figure is capable of receiving; yet we are expressly told in scripture they had no such respectable appearance; and of St. Paul in particular, we are told by himself, that his *bodily* presence was *mean*. Alexander is said

to have been of a low stature: a Painter ought not so to represent him. Agesilaus was low, lame, and of a mean appearance: none of these defects ought to appear in a piece of which he is the hero. In conformity to custom, I call this part of the art History Painting; it ought to be called Poetical, as in reality it is.

All this is not falsifying any fact; it is taking an allowed poetical licence. A painter of portraits retains the individual likeness; a painter of history shows the man by showing his actions. A painter must compensate the natural deficiencies of his art. He has but one sentence to utter, but one moment to exhibit. He cannot, like the poet or historian, expatiate, and impress the mind with great veneration for the character of the hero or saint he represents, though he lets us know at the same time, that the saint was deformed, or the hero lame. The Painter has no other means of giving an idea of the dignity of the mind, but by that external appearance which grandeur of thought does generally, though not always, impress on the countenance; and

by that correspondence of figure to sentiment and situation, which all men wish, but cannot command. The Painter who may in this one particular attain with ease what others desire in vain, ought to give all that he possibly can, since there are so many circumstances of true greatness that he cannot give at all. He cannot make his hero talk like a great man; he must make him look like one. For which reason, he ought to be well studied in the analysis of those circumstances which constitute dignity of appearance in real life.

As in Invention, so likewise in Expression, care must be taken not to run into particularities. Those expressions alone should be given to the figures which their respective situations generally produce. Nor is this enough; each person should also have that expression which men of his rank generally exhibit. The joy, or the grief of a character of dignity is not to be expressed in the same manner as a similar passion in a vulgar face. Upon this principle, Bernini, perhaps, may be subject to censure. This

sculptor, in many respects admirable, has given a very mean expression to his statue of David, who is represented as just going to throw the stone from the sling; and in order to give it the expression of energy, he has made him biting his under-lip. This expression is far from being general, and still farther from being dignified. He might have seen it in an instance or two; and he mistook accident for generality.

With respect to Colouring, though it may appear at first a part of painting merely mechanical, yet it still has its rules, and those grounded upon that presiding principle which regulates both the great and the little in the study of a painter. By this, the first effect of the picture is produced; and as this is performed, the spectator as he walks the gallery, will stop, or pass along. To give a general air of grandeur at first view, all trifling or artful play of little lights, or an attention to a variety of tints is to be avoided; a quietness and simplicity must reign over the whole work; to which a breadth of uniform, and simple colour, will very much con-

tribute. Grandeur of effect is produced by two different ways, which seem entirely opposed to each other. One is, by reducing the colours to little more than chiara oscuro, which was often the practice of the Bolognian schools; and the other, by making the colours very distinct and forcible, such as we see in those of Rome and Florence; but still, the presiding principle of both those manners is simplicity. Certainly, nothing can be more simple than monotony; and the distinct blue, red, and yellow colours which are seen in the draperies of the Roman and Florentine schools, though they have not that kind of harmony which is produced by a variety of broken and transparent colours, have that effect of grandeur which was intended. Perhaps these distinct colours strike the mind more forcibly, from there not being any great union between them; as martial musick, which is intended to rouse the nobler passions, has its effect from the sudden and strongly marked transitions from one note to another, which that style of musick requires; whilst in that which is intended to move the softer passions, the notes imperceptibly melt into one another.

In the same manner as the historical Painter never enters into the detail of colours, so neither does he debase his conceptions with minute attention to the discriminations of Drapery. It is the inferior style that marks the variety of stuffs. With him, the cloathing is neither woollen, nor linen, nor silk, satin, or velvet: it is drapery; it is nothing more. The art of disposing the foldings of the drapery makes a very considerable part of the painter's study. To make it merely natural, is a mechanical operation, to which neither genius nor taste are required; whereas, it requires the nicest judgment to dispose the drapery, so that the folds shall have an easy communication, and gracefully follow each other, with such natural negligence as to look like the effect of chance, and at the same time show the figure under it to the utmost advantage.

Carlo Maratti was of opinion, that the disposition of drapery was a more difficult art than even that of drawing the human figure; that a Student might be more easily taught the latter than the [illegible]; as the rules of

drapery, he said, could not be so well ascertained as those for delineating a correct form. This, perhaps, is a proof how willingly we favour our own peculiar excellence. Carlo Maratti is said to have valued himself particularly upon his skill in this part of his art; yet in him, the disposition appears so ostentatiously artificial, that he is inferior to Raffaelle, even in that which gave him his best claim to reputation.

Such is the great principle by which we must be directed in the nobler branches of our art. Upon this principle, the Roman, the Florentine, the Bolognese schools, have formed their practice; and by this they have deservedly obtained the highest praise. These are the three great schools of the world in the epick style. The best of the French school, Poussin, Le Sueur, and Le Brun, have formed themselves upon these models, and consequently may be said, though Frenchmen, to be a colony from the Roman school. Next to these, but in a very different style of [illegible]ellence, we may rank the Venetian, toge[illegible] with the Flemish and the Dutch schools;

all professing to depart from the great purposes of painting, and catching at applause by inferior qualities.

I am not ignorant that some will censure me for placing the Venetians in this inferior class, and many of the warmest admirers of painting will think them unjustly degraded; but I wish not to be misunderstood. Though I can by no means allow them to hold any rank with the nobler schools of painting, they accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted. But as mere elegance is their principal object, as they seem more willing to dazzle than to affect, it can be no injury to them to suppose that their practice is useful only to its proper end. But what may heighten the elegant may degrade the sublime. There is a simplicity, and I may add, severity, in the great manner, which is, I am afraid, almost incompatible with this comparatively sensual style.

Tintoret, Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, seem to have painted with no other purpose than to be admired for

their skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting, and to make a parade of that art, which, as I before observed, the higher style requires its followers to conceal.

In a conference of the French Academy, at which were present Le Brun, Sebastian, Bourdon, and all the eminent Artists of that age, one of the academicians desired to have their opinion on the conduct of Paul Veronese, who, though a Painter of great consideration, had, contrary to the strict rules of art, in his picture of Perseus and Andromeda, represented the principal figure in shade. To this question no satisfactory answer was then given. But I will venture to say, that if they had considered the class of the Artist, and ranked him as an ornamental Painter, there would have been no difficulty in answering "—It was unreasonable to expect what was "never intended. His intention was solely "to produce an effect of light and shadow; "every thing was to be sacrificed to that "intent, and the capricious composition of "that picture suited very well with the style "which he professed."

Young minds are indeed too apt to be captivated by this splendour of style; and that of the Venetians is particularly pleasing; for by them, all those parts of the Art that gave pleasure to the eye or sense, have been cultivated with care, and carried to the degree nearest to perfection. The powers exerted in the mechanical part of the Art have been called *the language of Painters*; but we may say, that it is but poor eloquence which only shows that the orator can talk. Words should be employed as the means, not as the end: language is the instrument, conviction is the work.

The language of Painting must indeed be allowed these masters; but even in that, they have shown more copiousness than choice, and more luxuriancy than judgment. If we consider the uninteresting subjects of their invention, or at least the uninteresting manner in which they are treated; if we attend to their capricious composition, their violent and affected contrasts, whether of figures or of light and shadow, the richness of their drapery, and at the same time, the

mean effect which the discrimination of stuffs gives to their pictures; if to these we add their total inattention to expression; and then reflect on the conceptions and the learning of Michael Angelo, or the simplicity of Raffaelle, we can no longer dwell on the comparison. Even in colouring, if we compare the quietness and chastity of the Bolognese pencil to the bustle and tumult that fills every part of a Venetian picture, without the least attempt to interest the passions, their boasted art will appear a mere struggle without effect; *a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.*

Such as suppose that the great style might happily be blended with the ornamental, that the simple, grave and majestick dignity of Raffaelle could unite with the glow and bustle of a Paolo, or Tintoret, are totally mistaken. The principles by which each is attained are so contrary to each other, that they seem, in my opinion, incompatible, and as impossible to exist together, as that in the mind the most sublime ideas and the lowest sensuality should at the same time be united.

The subjects of the Venetian Painters are mostly such as give them an opportunity of introducing a great number of figures; such as feasts, marriages, and processions, publick martyrdoms, or miracles. I can easily conceive that Paul Veronese, if he were asked, would say, that no subject was proper for an historical picture, but such as admitted at least forty figures: for in a less number, he would assert, there could be no opportunity of the Painter's showing his art in composition, his dexterity of managing and disposing the masses of light and groups of figures, and of introducing a variety of Eastern dresses and characters in their rich stuffs.

But the thing is very different with a pupil of the greater schools. Annibale Caracci thought twelve figures sufficient for any story; he conceived that more would contribute to no end but to fill space; that they would be but cold spectators of the general action, or, to use his own expression, that they would be *figurers to be let*. Besides, it is impossible for a picture composed of so many parts to have that effect so indispensa-

bly necessary to grandeur, that of one complete whole. However contradictory it may be in geometry, it is true in taste, that many little things will not make a great one. The Sublime impresses the mind at once with one great idea; it is a single blow: the Elegant indeed may be produced by repetition; by an accumulation of many minute circumstances.

However great the difference is between the composition of the Venetian, and the rest of the Italian schools, there is full as great a disparity in the effect of their pictures as produced by colours. And though in this respect the Venetians must be allowed extraordinary skill, yet even that skill, as they have employed it, will but ill correspond with the great style. Their colouring is not only too brilliant, but, I will venture to say, too harmonious, to produce that solidity, steadiness, and simplicity of effect, which heroick subjects require, and which simple or grave colours only can give to a work. That they are to be cautiously studied by those who are ambitious

of treading the great walk of history is confirmed, if it wants confirmation, by the greatest of all authorities, Michael Angelo. This wonderful man, after having seen a picture by Titian, told Vasaro, who accompanied him* "that he liked much his "colouring and manner;" but then he added, "that it was a pity the Venetian "painters did not learn to draw correctly in "their early youth, and adopt a better *man-*"*ner of study.*"

By this it appears, that the principal attention of the Venetian painters, in the opinion of Michael Angelo, seemed to be engrossed by the study of colours, to the neglect of the *ideal beauty of form*, or propriety of expression. But if general censure was given to that school from the sight of a picture of Titian, how much more heavily and more justly would the censure fall on

* Dicendo, che molto gli piaceva il colorito suo, e la maniera; mà che era un peccato, che a Venezia non s'Imparasse da principio a disegnare bene, e che non havessano que' pittori miglior modo nello studio. Vas. tom. iii, p. 226. Vita di Tiziano.

Paolo Veronese, and more especially on Tintoret? And here I cannot avoid citing Vasari's opinion of the style and manner of Tintoret. "Of all the extraordinary geni-
"uses*," says he, "that have practised the
"art of painting, for wild, capricious, ex-
"travagant, and fantastical inventions, for
"furious impetuosity and boldness in the
"execution of his work, there is none like
"Tintoret; his strange whimsies are even
"beyond extravagance, and his works seem
"to be produced rather by chance, than in
"consequence of any previous design, as
"if he wanted to convince the world that
"the art was a trifle, and of the most easy
"attainment."

For my own part, when I speak of the

* Nelle cose della pittura, stravagante, capriccioso, presto, e resoluto, et il più terrible cervello, che habbia havuto mai la pittura, come si può vedere in tutte le sue opere; e ne' componimenti delle storie, fantastiche, e fatte da lui diversamente, e fuori dell' uso degli altri pittori: anzi hà superato la stravaganza, con le nuove, e capricciose inventioni, e strani ghiribizzi del suo intelleto, che ha lavorato a caso, e senza disegno, quasi monstrando che quest' arte è una baia.

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Venetian painters, I wish to be understood to mean Paolo Veronese and Tintoret, to the exclusion of Titian; for though his style is not so pure as that of many other of the Italian schools, yet there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him, which, however awkward in his imitators, seems to become him exceedingly. His portraits alone, from the nobleness and simplicity of character which he always gave them, will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank in this branch of the art.

It is not with Titian, but with the seducing qualities of the two former, that I could wish to caution you against being too much captivated. These are the persons who may be said to have exhausted all the powers of florid eloquence, to debauch the young and unexperienced; and have, without doubt, been the cause of turning off the attention of the connoisseur and of the patron of art, as well as that of the painter, from those higher excellencies of which the art is capable, and which ought to be re-

quired in every considerable production. By them, and their imitators, a style merely ornamental has been disseminated throughout all Europe. Rubens carried it to Flanders: Voet to France; and Lucca Giordano, to Spain and Naples.

The Venetian is indeed the most splendid of the *schools* of elegance; and it is not without reason, that the best performances in this lower school are valued higher than the second-rate performances of those above them; for every picture has value when it has a decided character, and is excellent in its kind. But the student must take care not to be so much dazzled with this splendour, as to be tempted to imitate what must ultimately lead from perfection. Poussin, whose eye was always steadily fixed on the Sublime, has been often heard to say, "That a particular attention to colouring "was an obstacle to the student, in his pro-"gress to the great end and design of the "art; and that he who attaches himself "to this principal end, will acquire by

" practice a reasonable good method of " colouring*."

Though it be allowed that elaborate harmony of colouring, a brilliancy of tints, a soft and gradual transition from one to another, present to the eye, what an harmonious concert of musick does to the ear, it must be remembered, that painting is not merely a gratification of the sight. Such excellence, though properly cultivated, where nothing higher than elegance is intended, is weak and unworthy of regard, when the work aspires to grandeur and sublimity.

The same reasons that have been urged to show that a mixture of the Venetian style cannot improve the great style, will hold good in regard to the Flemish and Dutch schools. Indeed the Flemish school, of

* Que cette application singuliere n'etoit qu'un obstacle pour empêcher de parvenir au veritable but de la peinture, & celui qui s'atiache au principal, acquiert par la pratique une assez belle maniere de peindre. Conference de l'Acad. Franc.

which Rubens is the head, was formed upon that of the Venetian; like them, he took his figures too much from the people before him. But it must be allowed in favour of the Venetians, that he was more gross than they, and carried all their mistaken methods to a far greater excess. In the Venetian school itself, where they all err from the same cause, there is a difference in the effect. The difference between Paolo and Bassano seems to be only, that one introduced Venetian gentlemen into his pictures, and the other the boors of the district of Bassano, and called them patriarchs and prophets.

The painters of the Dutch school have still more locality. With them, a history-piece is properly a portrait of themselves; whether they describe the inside or outside of their houses, we have their own people engaged in their own peculiar occupations; working or drinking, playing or fighting. The circumstances that enter into a picture of this kind, are so far from giving a general view of human life, that they ex-

hibit all the minute particularities of a nation differing in several respects from the rest of mankind. Yet, let them have their share of more humble praise. The painters of this school are excellent in their own way; they are only ridiculous when they attempt general history on their own narrow principles, and debase great events by the meanness of their characters.

Some inferior dexterity, some extraordinary mechanical power is apparently that from which they seek distinction. Thus, we see, that school alone has the custom of representing candle-light not as it really appears to us by night, but red, as it would illuminate objects to a spectator by day. Such tricks, however pardonable in the little style, where petty effects are the sole end, are inexcusable in the greater, where the attention should never be drawn aside by trifles, but should be entirely occupied by the subject itself.

The same local principles which characterize the Dutch school extend even to their

landscape painters; and Rubens himself, who has painted many landscapes, has sometimes transgressed in this particular. Their pieces in this way are, I think, always a representation of an individual spot, and each in its kind a very faithful but a very confined portrait. Claude Lorrain, on the contrary, was convinced, that taking nature as he found it seldom produced beauty. His pictures are a composition of the various draughts which he had previously made from various beautiful scenes and prospects. However, Rubens in some measure has made amends for the deficency with which he is charged; he has contrived to raise and animate his otherwise uninteresting views, by introducing a rainbow, storm, or some particular accidental effect of light. That the practice of Claude Lorrain, in respect to his choice, is to be adopted by Landscape painters in opposition to that of the Flemish and Dutch schools, there can be no doubt, as its truth is founded upon the same principle as that by which the Historical Painter acquires perfect form. But whether landscape painting has a right

to aspire so far as to reject what the painters call Accidents of Nature, is not easy to determine. It is certain Claude Lorrain seldom, if ever, availed himself of those accidents; either he thought that such peculiarities were contrary to that style of general nature which he professed, or that it would catch the attention too strongly, and destroy that quietness and repose which he thought necessary to that kind of painting.

A Portrait-painter likewise, when he attempts history, unless he is upon his guard, is likely to enter too much into the detail. He too frequently makes his historical heads look like portraits; and this was once the custom amongst those old painters, who revived the art before general ideas were practised or understood. An History-painter paints man in general; a Portrait-painter, a particular man, and consequently a defective model.

Thus an habitual practice in the lower exercises of the art will prevent many from

attaining the greater. But such of us who move in these humbler walks of the profession, are not ignorant that, as the natural dignity of the subject is less, the more all the little ornamental helps are necessary to its embellishment. It would be ridiculous for a painter of domestick scenes, of portraits, landscapes, animals, or still life, to say that he despised those qualities which has made the subordinate schools so famous. The art of colouring, and the skilful management of light and shadow, are essential requisites in his confined labours. If we descend still lower, what is the painter of fruit and flowers without the utmost art in colouring, and what the painters call handling; that is, a lightness of pencil that implies great practice, and gives the appearance of being done with ease? Some here, I believe, must remember a flower-painter whose boast it was, that he scorned to paint for the *million*: no, he professed to paint in the true Italian taste; and despising the crowd, called strenuously upon the *few* to admire him. His idea of the Italian taste was to paint as black and dirty as he could, and to leave all clearness and

brilliancy of colouring to those who were fonder of money than immortality. The consequence was such as might be expected. For these petty excellencies are here essential beauties; and without this merit the artist's work will be more short-lived than the objects of his imitation.

From what has been advanced, we must now be convinced that there are two distinct styles in history-painting: the grand, and the splendid or ornamental.

The great style stands alone, and does not require, perhaps does not so well admit, any addition from inferior beauties. The ornamental style also possesses its own peculiar merit. However, though the union of the two may make a sort of composite style, yet that style is likely to be more imperfect than either of those which go to its composition. Both kinds have merit, and may be excellent though in different ranks, if uniformity be preserved, and the general and particular ideas of nature be not mixed. Even the meanest of them is difficult enough to attain; and the

first place being already occupied by the great artists in each department, some of those who followed thought there was less room for them, and feeling the impulse of ambition and the desire of novelty, and being at the same time perhaps willing to take the shortest way, endeavoured to make for themselves a place between both. This they have effected by forming an union of the different orders. But as the grave and majestick style would suffer by an union with the florid and gay, so also has the Venetian ornament in some respect been injured by attempting an alliance with simplicity.

It may be asserted, that the great style is always more or less contaminated by any meaner mixture. But it happens in a few instances, that the lower may be improved by borrowing from the grand. Thus if a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent,

which has annexed to it no ideas of meanness from its being familiar to us. But if an exact resemblance of an individual be considered as the sole object to be aimed at, the portrait-painter will be apt to lose more than he gains by the acquired dignity taken from general nature. It is very difficult to ennoble the character of a countenance but at the expense of the likeness, which is what is most generally required by such as sit to the painter.

Of those who have practised the composite style, and have succeeded in this perilous attempt, perhaps the foremost is Correggio. His style is founded upon modern grace and elegance, to which is superadded something of the simplicity of the grand style. A breadth of light and colour, the general ideas of the drapery, an uninterupted flow of outline, all conspire to this effect. Next to him (perhaps equal to him) Parmegiano has dignified the genteelness of modern effeminacy, by uniting it with the simplicity of the ancients and the grandeur and severity of Michael Angelo. It must be confessed,

however, that these two extraordinary men, by endeavouring to give the utmost degree of grace, have sometimes perhaps exceeded its boundaries, and have fallen into the most hateful of all hateful qualities, affectation. Indeed, it is the peculiar characteristick of men of genius to be afraid of coldness and insipidity, from which they think they never can be too far removed. It particularly happens to these great masters of grace and elegance. They often boldly drive on to the very verge of ridicule; the spectator is alarmed, but at the same time admires their vigour and intrepidity:

Strange graces still, and stranger flights they had,
. . . . . .
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
As when they touch'd the brink of all we hate.

The errors of genius, however, are pardonable, and none even of the more exalted painters are wholly free from them; but they have taught us, by the rectitude of their general practice, to correct their own affected or accidental deviation. The very first have not been always upon their guard, and per-

haps there is not a fault, but what may take shelter under the most venerable authorities; yet that style only is perfect, in which the noblest principles are uniformly pursued; and those masters only are entitled to the first rank in our estimation, who have enlarged the boundaries of their art, and have raised it to its highest dignity, by exhibiting the general ideas of nature.

On the whole, it seems to me that there is but one presiding principle, which regulates, and gives stability to every art. The works, whether of poets, painters, moralists, or historians, which are built upon general nature, live for ever; while those which depend for their existence on particular customs and habits, a partial view of nature, or the fluctuation of fashion, can only be coeval with that which first raised them from obscurity. Present time and future may be considered as rivals, and he who solicits the one must expect to be discountenanced by the other.

DISCOURSE V.

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DECEMBER 10, 1772.

DISCOURSE V.

CIRCUMSPECTION REQUIRED IN ENDEAVOURING TO UNITE CONTRARY EXCELLENCIES.—THE EXPRESSION OF A MIXED PASSION NOT TO BE ATTEMPTED.—EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO EXCELLED IN THE GREAT STYLE;—RAFFAELLE, MICHAEL ANGELO, THOSE TWO EXTRAORDINARY MEN COMPARED WITH EACH OTHER.—THE CHARACTERISTICAL STYLE.—SALVATOR ROSA MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THAT STYLE; AND OPPOSED TO CARLO MARATTI.—SKETCH OF THE CHARACTERS OF POUSSIN AND RUBENS. THESE TWO PAINTERS ENTIRELY DISSIMILAR, BUT CONSISTENT WITH THEMSELVES.—THIS CONSISTENCY REQUIRED IN ALL PARTS OF THE ART.

GENTLEMEN,

I PURPOSE to carry on in this discourse the subject which I began in my last. It was my wish upon that occasion to incite you to pursue the higher excellencies of the art. But I fear that in this particular I have been misunderstood. Some are ready to imagine when any of their favourite acquirements in the art are properly classed, that they are

utterly disgraced. This is a very great mistake: nothing has its proper lustre but in its proper place. That which is most worthy of esteem in its allotted sphere, becomes an object, not of respect, but of derision, when it is forced into a higher, to which it is not suited; and there it becomes doubly a source of disorder, by occupying a situation which is not natural to it, and by putting down from the first place what is in reality of too much magnitude to become with grace and proportion that subordinate station, to which something of less value would be much better suited.

My advice in a word is this: keep your principal attention fixed upon the higher excellencies. If you compass them, and compass nothing more, you are still in the first class. We may regret the innumerable beauties which you may want; you may be very imperfect: but still, you are an imperfect artist of the highest order.

If, when you have got thus far, you can add any, or all, of the subordinate qualifi-

cations, it is my wish and advice that you should not neglect them. But this is as much a matter of circumspection and caution at least, as of eagerness and pursuit.

The mind is apt to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects; and that scale of perfection which I wish always to be preserved, is in the greatest danger of being totally disordered, and even inverted.

Some excellencies bear to be united, and are improved by union; others are of a discordant nature; and the attempt to join them, only produces a harsh jarring of incongruent principles. The attempt to unite contrary excellencies (of form, for instance) in a single figure, can never escape degenerating into the monstrous, but by sinking into the insipid; by taking away its marked character, and weakening its expression.

This remark is true to a certain degree with regard to the passions. If you mean to preserve the most perfect beauty *in its most perfect state*, you cannot express the passions, all of which produce distortion and defor-

mity, more or less, in the most beautiful faces.

Guido, from want of choice in adapting his subject to his ideas and his powers, or from attempting to preserve beauty where it could not be preserved, has in this respect succeeded very ill. His figures are often engaged in subjects that required great expression: yet his Judith and Holofernes, the daughter of Herodias with the Baptist's head, the Andromeda, and some even of the Mothers of the Innocents, have little more expression than his Venus attired by the Graces.

Obvious as these remarks appear, there are many writers on our art, who, not being of the profession, and consequently not knowing what can or cannot be done, have been very liberal of absurd praises in their descriptions of favourite works. They always find in them what they are resolved to find. They praise excellencies that can hardly exist together; and above all things are fond of describing with great exactness the expression of a mixed passion, which more particularly appears to me out of the reach of our art,

Such are many disquisitions which I have read on some of the Cartoons and other pictures of Raffaelle, where the Criticks have described their own imaginations; or indeed where the excellent master himself may have attempted this expression of passions above the powers of the art; and has, therefore, by an indistinct and imperfect marking, left room for every imagination, with equal probability to find a passion of his own. What has been, and what can be done in the art, is sufficiently difficult; we need not be mortified or discouraged at not being able to execute the conceptions of a romantick imagination. Art has its boundaries, though imagination has none. We can easily, like the ancients, suppose a Jupiter to be possessed of all those powers and perfections which the subordinate Deities were endowed with separately. Yet, when they employed their art to represent him, they confined his character to majesty alone. Pliny, therefore, though we are under great obligations to him for the information he has given us in relation to the works of the antient artists, is very frequently wrong when he speaks of them, which he

does very often in the style of many of our modern connoisseurs. He observes, that in a statue of Paris, by Euphranor, you might discover at the same time three different characters; the dignity of a Judge of the Goddesses, the Lover of Helen, and the Conqueror of Achilles. A statue in which you endeavour to unite stately dignity, youthful elegance, and stern valour, most surely possess none of these to any eminent degree.

From hence it appears, that there is much difficulty as well as danger, in an endeavour to concentrate in a single subject those various powers, which rising from different points, naturally move in different directions.

The summit of excellence seems to be an assemblage of contrary qualities, but mixed, in such proportions, that no one part is found to counteract the other. How hard this is to be attained in every art, those only know, who have made the greatest progress in their respective professions.

To conclude what I have to say on this

part of the subject, which I think of great importance, I wish you to understand, that I do not discourage the younger Students from the noble attempt of uniting all the excellencies of art; but suggest to them, that, beside the difficulties which attend every arduous attempt, there is a peculiar difficulty in the choice of the excellencies which ought to be united, I wish you to attend to this, that you may try yourselves, whenever you are capable of that trial, what you can, and what you cannot do; and that, instead of dissipating your natural faculties over the immense field of possible excellence, you may choose some particular walk in which you may exercise all your powers: in order that each of you may become the first in his way. If any man shall be master of such a transcendant, commanding, and ductile genius, as to enable him to rise to the highest, and to stoop to the lowest, flights of art, and to sweep over all of them unobstructed and secure, he is fitter to give example than to receive instruction.

Having said thus much on the *union* of

excellencies, I will next say something of the subordination in which various excellencies ought to be kept.

I am of opinion, that the ornamental style, which in my discourse of last year I cautioned you against considering it as *principal*, may not be wholly unworthy the attention even of those who aim at the grand style, when it is properly placed and properly reduced.

But this study will be used with far better effect, if its principles are employed in softening the harshness and mitigating the rigour of the great style, than if it attempt to stand forward with any pretensions of its own to positive and original excellence. It was thus Lodovico Caracci, whose example I formerly recommended to you, employed it. He was acquainted with the works both of Correggio and the Venetian painters, and knew the principles by which they produced those pleasing effects which at the first glance prepossess us so much in their favour; but he took only as much from each as would em-

bellish, but not over-power, that manly strength and energy of style, which is his peculiar character.

Since I have already expatiated so largely in my former discourse, and in my present, upon the *styles* and *characters* of Painting, it will not be at all unsuitable to my subject if I mention to you some particulars relative to the leading principles, and capital works of those who excelled in the *great style*; that I may bring you from abstraction nearer to practice, and by exemplifying the positions which I have laid down, enable you to understand more clearly what I would enforce.

The principal works of modern art are in *Fresco*, a mode of painting which excludes attention to minute elegancies: yet these works in Fresco. are the productions on which the fame of the greatest masters depends: such are the pictures of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle in the Vatican; to which we may add the Cartoons; which, though not strictly to be called Fresco, yet may be put under

that denomination; and such are the works of Giulio Romano at Mantua. If these performances were destroyed, with them would be lost the best part of the reputation of those illustrious painters; for these are justly considered as the greatest efforts of our art which the world can boast. To these, therefore, we should principally direct our attention for higher excellencies. As for the lower arts, as they have been once discovered, they may be easily attained by those possessed of the former.

Raffaelle, who stands in general foremost of the first painters, owes his reputation, as I have observed, to his excellence in the higher parts of the art: his works in *Fresco*, therefore, ought to be the first object of our study and attention. His easel-works stand in a lower degree of estimation: for though he continually, to the day of his death, embellished his performances more and more with the addition of those lower ornaments, which entirely make the merit of some painters, yet he never arrived at such perfection as to make him an

object of imitation. He never was able to conquer perfectly that dryness, or even littleness of manner, which he inherited from his master. He never acquired that nicety of taste in colours, that breadth of light and shadow, that art and management of uniting light to light, and shadow to shadow, so as to make the object rise out of the ground with the plenitude of effect so much admired in the works of Correggio. When he painted in oil, his hand seemed to be so cramped and confined, that he not only lost that facility and spirit, but I think even that correctness of form, which is so perfect and admirable in his Fresco-works. I do not recollect any pictures of his of this kind, except perhaps the Transfiguration, in which there are not some parts that appear to be even feebly drawn. That this is not a necessary attendant on Oil-painting, we have abundant instances in more modern painters. Ludovico Caracci, for instance, preserved in his works in oil the same spirit, vigour, and correctness which he had in Fresco. I have no desire to degrade Raffaelle from the high rank which he deservedly holds: but by comparing him

with himself, he does not appear to me to be the same man in Oil as in Fresco.

From those who have ambition to tread in this great walk of the art, Michael Angelo claims the next attention. He did not possess so many excellencies as Raffaelle, but those which he had were of the highest kind. He considered the art as consisting of little more than what may be attained by sculpture: correctness of form, and energy of character. We ought not to expect more than an artist intends in his work. He never attempted those lesser elegancies and graces in the art. Vasari says, he never painted but one picture in oil, and resolved never to paint another, saying, it was an employment only fit for women and children.

If any man had a right to look down upon the lower accomplishments as beneath his attention, it was certainly Michael Angelo; nor can it be thought strange, that such a mind should have slighted or have been withheld from paying due attention to all those graces and embellishments of art, which have

diffused such lustre over the works of other painters.

It must be acknowledged, however, that together with these, which we wish he had more attended to, he has rejected all the false, though specious ornaments, which disgrace the works even of the most esteemed artists; and I will venture to say, that when those higher excellencies are more known and cultivated by the artists and the patrons of arts, his fame and credit will increase with our increasing knowledge. His name will then be held in the same veneration as it was in the enlightened age of Leo the Tenth: and it is remarkable that the reputation of this truly great man has been continually declining as the art itself has declined. For I must remark to you, that it has long been much on the decline, and that our only hope of its revival will consist in your being thoroughly sensible of its depravation and decay. It is to Michael Angelo, that we owe even the existence of Raffaelle: it is to him Raffaelle owes the grandeur of his style. He was taught by him to elevate his thoughts, and

to conceive his subjects with dignity. His genius, however formed to blaze and to shine, might, like fire in combustible matter, for ever have lain dormant, if it had not caught a spark by its contact with Michael Angelo; and though it never burst out with *his* extraordinary heat and vehemence, yet it must be acknowledged to be a more pure, regular, and chaste flame. Though our judgement must upon the whole decide in favour of Raffaelle, yet he never takes such a firm hold and entire possession of the mind as to make us desire nothing else, and to feel nothing wanting. The effect of the capital works of Michael Angelo perfectly corresponds to what Bouchardon said he felt from reading Homer; his whole frame appeared to himself to be enlarged, and all nature which surrounded him, diminished to atoms.

If we put these great artists in a light of comparison with each other, Raffaelle had more Taste and Fancy, Michael Angelo more Genius and Imagination. The one excelled in beauty; the other in energy.

Michael Angelo has more of the Poetical Inspiration; his ideas are vast and sublime; his people are a superior order of beings; there is nothing about them, nothing in the air of their actions or their attitudes, or the style and cast of their limbs or features, that reminds us of their belonging to our own species. Raffaelle's imagination is not so elevated; his figures are not so much disjoined from our own diminutive race of beings, though his ideas are chaste, noble, and of great conformity to their subjects. Michael Angelo's works have a strong, peculiar, and marked character: they seem to proceed from his own mind entirely, and that mind so rich and abundant, that he never needed, or seemed to disdain, to look abroad for foreign help. Raffaelle's materials are generally borrowed, though the noble structure is his own. The excellency of this extraordinary man lay in the propriety, beauty, and majesty of his characters, the judicious contrivance of his Composition, his correctness of Drawing, purity of Taste, and skilful accommodation of other men's conceptions to his own

purpose. Nobody excelled him in that judgement, with which he united to his own observations on Nature, the Energy of Michael Angelo, and the Beauty and Simplicity of the Antique. To the question therefore, which ought to hold the first rank, Raffaelle or Michael Angelo, it must be answered, that if it is to be given to him who possessed a greater combination of the higher qualities of the art than any other man, there is no doubt but Raffaelle is the first. But if, as Longinus thinks, the sublime, being the highest excellence that human composition can attain to, abundantly compensates the absence of every other beauty, and atones for all other deficiencies, then Michael Angelo demands the preference.

These two extraordinary men carried some of the higher excellencies of the art to a greater degree of perfection than probably they ever arrived at before. They certainly have not been excelled, nor equalled since. Many of their successors were induced to leave this great road as a beaten

path, endeavouring to surprise and please by something uncommon or new. When this desire of novelty has proceeded from mere idleness or caprice, it is not worth the trouble of criticism; but when it has been the result of a busy mind of a peculiar complexion, it is always striking and interesting, never insipid.

Such is the great style, as it appears in those who possessed it at its height: in this, search after novelty, in conception or in treating the subject, has no place.

But there is another style, which, though inferior to the former, has still great merit, because it shows that those who cultivated it were men of lively and vigorous imagination. This, which may be called the original or characteristical style, being less referred to any true archetype existing either in general or particular nature, must be supported by the painter's consistency in the principles which he has assumed, and in the union and harmony of his whole design. The excellency of every style, but of

the subordinate styles more especially, will very much depend on preserving that union and harmony between all the component parts, that they may appear to hang well together, as if the whole proceeded from one mind. It is in the works of art, as in the characters of men. The faults or defects of some men seem to become them, when they appear to be the natural growth, and of a piece with the rest of their character. A faithful picture of a mind, though it be not of the most elevated kind, though it be irregular, wild, and incorrect, yet if it be marked with that spirit and firmness which characterises works of genius, will claim attention, and be more striking than a combination of excellencies that do not seem to unite well together; or we may say, than a work that possesses even all excellencies, but those in a moderate degree.

One of the strongest-marked characters of this kind, which must be allowed to be subordinate to the great style, is that of Salvator Rosa. He gives us a peculiar cast of nature, which, though void of all grace,

elegance, and simplicity, though it has nothing of that elevation and dignity which belongs to the grand style, yet, has that sort of dignity which belongs to savage and uncultivated nature: but what is most to be admired in him, is, the perfect correspondence which he observed between the subjects which he chose and his manner of treating them. Every thing is of a piece: his Rocks, Trees, Sky, even to his handling, have the same rude and wild character which animates his figures.

With him we may contrast the character of Carlo Maratti, who, in my opinion, had no great vigour of mind or strength of original genius. He rarely seizes the imagination by exhibiting the higher excellencies, nor does he captivate us by that originality which attends the painter who thinks for himself. He knew and practised all the rules of art, and from a composition of Raffaelle, Caracci, and Guido, made up a style, of which the only fault was, that it had no manifest defects and no striking beauties; and that the principles of

his composition are never blended together, so as to form one uniform body original in its kind, or excellent in any view.

I will mention two other painters, who, though entirely dissimilar, yet by being each consistent with himself, and possessing a manner entirely his own, have both gained reputation, though for very opposite accomplishments. The painters I mean, are Rubens and Poussin. Rubens I mention in this place, as I think him a remarkable instance of the same mind being seen in all the various parts of the art. The whole is so much of a piece, that one can scarce be brought to believe but that if any one of the qualities he possessed had been more correct and perfect, his works would not have been so complete as they now appear. If we should allow him a greater purity and correctness of Drawing, his want of Simplicity in Composition, Colouring, and Drapery, would appear more gross.

In his Composition his art is too apparent. His figures have expression, and act with

energy, but without simplicity or dignity. His Colouring, in which he is eminently skilled, is notwithstanding too much of what we call tinted. Throughout the whole of his works, there is a proportionable want of that nicety of distinction and elegance of mind, which is required in the higher walks of painting: and to this want it may be in some degree ascribed, that those qualities which make the excellency of this subordinate style, appear in him with their greatest lustre. Indeed the facility with which he invented, the richness of his composition, the luxuriant harmony and brilliancy of his colouring, so dazzle the eye, that whilst his works continue before us, we cannot help thinking that all his deficiencies are fully supplied *.

Opposed to this florid, careless, loose, and inaccurate style, that of the simple, careful, pure, and correct style of Poussin seems to

* A more detailed character of Rubens may be found in the "Journey to Flanders and Holland," near the conclusion. M.

be a complete contrast. Yet however opposite their characters, in one thing they agreed; both of them always preserving a perfect correspondence between all the parts of their respective manners: insomuch that it may be doubted whether any alteration of what is considered as defective in either, would not destroy the effect of the whole.

Poussin lived and conversed with the ancient statues so long, that he may be said to have been better acquainted with them than with the people who were about him. I have often thought that he carried his veneration for them so far as to wish to give his works the air of Ancient Paintings. It is certain he copied some of the Antique Paintings, particularly the Marriage in the Aldobrandini-Palace at Rome, which I believe to be the best relique of those remote ages that has yet been found.

No works of any modern has so much of the air of Antique Painting as those of Poussin. His best performances have a remarkable dryness of manner, which though by no

means to be recommended for imitation, yet seems perfectly correspondent to that ancient simplicity which distinguishes his style. Like Polidoro he studied the ancients so much that he acquired a habit of thinking in their way, and seemed to know perfectly the actions and gestures they would use on every occasion.

Poussin in the latter part of his life changed from his dry manner to one much softer and richer, where there is a greater union between the figures and ground; as in the Seven Sacraments in the Duke of Orleans's collection; but neither these, nor any of his other pictures in this manner, are at all comparable to many in his dry manner which we have in England.

The favourite subjects of Poussin were Ancient Fables; and no painter was ever better qualified to paint such subjects, not only from his being eminently skilled in the knowledge of the ceremonies, customs and habits of the Ancients, but from his being so well acquainted with the different characters

which those who invented them gave to their allegorical figures. Though Rubens has shown great fancy in his Satyrs, Silenuses, and Fauns, yet they are not that distinct separate class of beings, which is carefully exhibited by the Ancients, and by Poussin. Certainly when such subjects of antiquity are represented, nothing in the picture ought to remind us of modern times. The mind is thrown back into antiquity, and nothing ought to be introduced that may tend to awaken it from the illusion.

Poussin seemed to think that the style and the language in which such stories are told, is not the worse for preserving some relish of the old way of painting, which seemed to give a general uniformity to the whole, so that the mind was thrown back into antiquity not only by the subject, but the execution.

If Poussin in imitation of the Ancients represents Apollo driving his chariot out of the sea by way of representing the Sun rising, if he personifies Lakes and Rivers, it is nowise offensive in him; but seems perfectly of

a piece with the general air of the picture. On the contrary, if the Figures which people his pictures had a modern air or countenance, if they appeared like our countrymen, if the draperies were like cloth or silk of our manufacture, if the landscape had the appearance of a modern view, how ridiculous would Apollo appear instead of the Sun; an old Man, or a Nymph with an urn, to represent a River or a Lake?

I cannot avoid mentioning here a circumstance in portrait-painting, which may help to confirm what has been said. When a portrait is painted in the Historical Style, as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual, nor completely ideal, every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture. The simplicity of the antique air and attitude, however much to be admired, is ridiculous when joined to a figure in a modern dress. It is not to my purpose to enter into the question at present, whether this mixed style ought to be adopted or not; yet if it is chosen, 'tis necessary it should be complete and all of a piece: the difference of

stuffs, for instance, which make the cloathing, should be distinguished in the same degree as the head deviates from a general idea. Without this union, which I have so often recommended, a work can have no marked and determined character, which is the peculiar and constant evidence of genius. But when this is accomplished to a high degree, it becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have fixed as the highest.

Thus I have given a sketch of the characters of Rubens and Salvator Rosa, as they appear to me to have the greatest uniformity of mind throughout their whole work. But we may add to these, all those Artists who are at the head of a class, and have had a school of imitators from Michael Angelo down to Watteau. Upon the whole it appears, that setting aside the Ornamental Style, there are two different modes, either of which a Student may adopt without degrading the dignity of his art. The object of the first is, to combine the higher excellencies and embellish them to the greatest advantage; of the other, to carry one of these excellencies

to the highest degree. But those who possess neither must be classed with them, who, as Shakspeare says, are *men of no mark or likelihood.*

I inculcate as frequently as I can your forming yourselves upon great principles and great models. Your time will be much mis-spent in every other pursuit. Small excellencies should be viewed, not studied; they ought to be viewed, because nothing ought to escape a Painter's observation: but for no other reason.

There is another caution which I wish to give you. Be as select in those whom you endeavour to please, as in those whom you endeavour to imitate. Without the love of fame you can never do any thing excellent; but by an excessive and undistinguishing thirst after it, you will come to have vulgar views; you will degrade your style; and your taste will be entirely corrupted. It is certain that the lowest style will be the most popular, as it falls within the compass of ignorance itself; and the Vulgar will always be pleased with what is natural, in the confined and misunderstood sense of the word.

One would wish that such depravation of taste should be counteracted with that manly pride which actuated Euripides when he said to the Athenians who criticised his works, "I do not compose my works in order to be "corrected by you, but to instruct you." It is true to have a right to speak thus, a man must be an Euripides. However, thus much may be allowed, that when an Artist is sure that he is upon firm ground, supported by the authority and practice of his predecessors of the greatest reputation, he may then assume the boldness and intrepidity of genius; at any rate he must not be tempted out of the right path by any allurement of popularity, which always accompanies the lower styles of painting.

I mention this, because our Exhibitions, while they produce such admirable effects by nourishing emulation, and calling out genius, have also a mischievous tendency, by seducing the Painter to an ambition of pleasing indiscriminately the mixed multitude of people who resort to them.

DISCOURSE VI.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1774.

DISCOURSE VI.

MITATION.—GENIUS BEGINS WHERE RULES END.—INVENTION:—ACQUIRED BY BEING CONVERSANT WITH THE INVENTIONS OF OTHERS.—THE TRUE METHOD OF IMITATING.—BORROWING, HOW FAR ALLOWABLE.—SOMETHING TO BE GATHERED FROM EVERY SCHOOL.

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I have taken the liberty of address- ng you on the course and order of your studies, never proposed to enter into a minute detail f the art. This I have always left to the veral Professors, who pursue the end of r institution with the highest honour to mselves, and with the greatest advantage he Students.

ly purpose in the discourses I have held e Academy has been to lay down certain al positions, which seem to me proper e formation of a sound taste: principles y to [redacted] the pupils against those

errors, into which the sanguine temper common to their time of life has a tendency to lead them; and which have rendered abortive the hopes of so many successions of promising young men in all parts of Europe. I wished also, to intercept and suppress those prejudices which particularly prevail when the mechanism of painting is come to its perfection; and which, when they do prevail, are certain utterly to destroy the higher and more valuable parts of this literate and liberal profession.

These two have been my principal purposes; they are still as much my concern as ever; and if I repeat my own notions on the subject, you who know how fast mistake and prejudice, when neglected, gain ground upon truth and reason, will easily excuse me. I only attempt to set the same thing in the greatest variety of lights.

The subject of this discourse will be IMITATION, as far as a painter is concerned in it. By imitation, I do not mean imitation in its largest sense, but simply the following

of other masters, and the advantage to be drawn from the study of their works.

Those who have undertaken to write on our art, and have represented it as a kind of *inspiration*, as a *gift* bestowed upon peculiar favourites at their birth, seem to insure a much more favourable disposition from their readers, and have a much more captivating and liberal air, than he who attempts to examine, coldly, whether there are any means by which this art may be acquired; how the mind may be strengthened and expanded, and what guides will show the way to eminence.

It is very natural for those who are unacquainted with the *cause* of any thing extraordinary, to be astonished at the *effect*, and to consider it as a kind of magick. They, who have never observed the gradation by which art is acquired; who see only what is the full result of long labour and application of an infinite number and infinite variety of acts, are apt to conclude from their entire inability to do the same at once, that it is not only inaccessible to themselves, but can be

ters, indeed almost all imitation, which implies a more regular and progressive method of attaining the ends of painting, has ever been particularly inveighed against with great keenness, both by ancient and modern writers.

To derive all from native power, to owe nothing to another, is the praise which men, who do not much think on what they are saying, bestow sometimes upon others, and sometimes on themselves; and their imaginary dignity is naturally heightened by a supercilious censure of the low, the barren, the groveling, the servile imitator. It would be no wonder if a student, frightened by these terrifick and disgraceful epithets, with which the poor imitators are so often loaded, should let fall his pencil in mere despair; (conscious as he must be, how much he has been indebted to the labours of others, how little, how very little of his art was born with him;) and consider it as hopeless, to set about acquiring by the imitation of any human master, what he is taught to suppose is matter of inspiration from heaven.

Some allowance must be made for what is said in the gaiety of rhetorick. We cannot suppose that any one can really mean to exclude all imitation of others. A position so wild would scarce deserve a serious answer; for it is apparent, if we were forbid to make use of the advantages which our predecessors afford us, the art would be always to begin, and consequently remain always in its infant state; and it is a common observation, that no art was ever invented and carried to perfection at the same time.

But to bring us entirely to reason and sobriety, let it be observed, that a painter must not only be of necessity an imitator of the works of nature, which alone is sufficient to dispel this phantom of inspiration, but he must be as necessarily an imitator of the works of other painters: this appears more humiliating, but is equally true; and no man can be an artist, whatever he may suppose, upon any other terms.

However, those who appear more moderate and reasonable, allow, that our study is

to begin by imitation; but maintain that we should no longer use the thoughts of our predecessors, when we are become able to think for ourselves. They hold that imitation is as hurtful to the more advanced student, as it was advantageous to the beginner.

For my own part, I confess, I am not only very much disposed to maintain the absolute necessity of imitation in the first stages of the art; but am of opinion, that the study of other masters, which I here call imitation, may be extended throughout our whole lives, without any danger of the inconveniencies with which it is charged, of enfeebling the mind, or preventing us from giving that original air which every work undoubtedly ought always to have.

I am on the contrary persuaded, that by imitation only, variety, and even originality of invention, is produced. I will go further; even genius, at least what generally is so called, is the child of imitation. But as this appears to be contrary to the general opinion,

I must explain my position before I enforce it.

Genius is supposed to be a power of producing excellencies, which are out of the reach of the rules of art; a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire.

This opinion of the impossibility of acquiring those beauties, which stamp the work with the character of genius, supposes that it is something more fixed, than in reality it is; and that we always do, and ever did agree in opinion, with respect to what should be considered as the characteristick of genius. But the truth is, that the *degree* of excellence which proclaims *Genius* is different, in different times and different places; and what shows it to be so is, that mankind have often changed their opinion upon this matter.

When the Arts were in their infancy, the power of merely drawing the likeness of any object, was considered as one of its greatest efforts. The common people, ignorant of

the principles of art, talk the same language even to this day. But when it was found that every man could be taught to do this, and a great deal more, merely by the observance of certain precepts; the name of Genius then shifted its application, and was given only to him who added the peculiar character of the object he represented; to him who had invention, expression, grace, or dignity; in short, those qualities, or excellencies, the power of producing which, could not *then* be taught by any known and promulgated rules.

We are very sure that the beauty of form, the expression of the passions, the art of composition, even the power of giving a general air of grandeur to a work, is at present very much under the dominion of rules. These excellencies were, heretofore, considered merely as the effects of genius; and justly, if genius is not taken for inspiration, but as the effect of close observation and experience.

He who first made any of these observations, and digested them, so as to form an

invariable principle for himself to work by, had that merit, but probably no one went very far at once; and generally, the first who gave the hint, did not know how to pursue it steadily and methodically; at least not in the beginning. He himself worked on it, and improved it; others worked more, and improved further; until the secret was discovered, and the practice made as general, as refined practice can be made. How many more principles may be fixed and ascertained, we cannot tell; but as criticism is likely to go hand in hand with the art which is its subject, we may venture to say, that as that art shall advance, its powers will be still more and more fixed by rules.

But by whatever strides criticism may gain ground, we need be under no apprehension, that invention will ever be annihilated, or subdued; or intellectual energy be brought entirely within the restraint of written law. Genius will still have room enough to expatiate, and keep always at the same distance from narrow comprehension and mechanical performance.

What we now call Genius, begins, not where rules, abstractedly taken, end; but where known vulgar and trite rules have no longer any place. It must of necessity, be, that even works of Genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules; it cannot be by chance, that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and such as are called men of Genius, work, are either such as they discover by their own peculiar observations, or of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words; especially as artists are not very frequently skilful in that mode of communicating ideas. Unsubstantial, however, as these rules may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist; and he works from them with as much certainty, as if they were embodied, as I may say, upon paper. It is true, these refined principles cannot be always made palpable, like the more gross rules of art; yet it does not follow, but that the mind

may be put in such a train, that it shall perceive, by a kind of scientifick sense, that propriety, which words, particularly words of unpractised writers, such as we are, can but very feebly suggest.

Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find, that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others, that we learn to invent; as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think.

Whoever has so far formed his taste, as to be able to relish and feel the beauties of the great masters, has gone a great way in his study; for, merely from a consciousness of this relish of the right, the mind swells with an inward pride, and is almost as powerfully affected, as if it had itself produced what it admires. Our hearts, frequently warmed in his manner by the contact of those whom we wish to resemble, will undoubtedly catch something of their way of thinking; and we shall receive in our own bosoms some radiation at least of their fire and splendour. That

disposition, which is so strong in children, still continues with us, of catching involuntarily the general air and manner of those with whom we are most conversant; with this difference only, that a young mind is naturally pliable and imitative; but in a more advanced state it grows rigid, and must be warmed and softened, before it will receive a deep impression.

From these considerations, which a little of your own reflection will carry a great way further, it appears, of what great consequence it is, that our minds should be habituated to the contemplation of excellence; and that, far from being contented to make such habits the discipline of our youth only, we should, to the last moment of our lives, continue a settled intercourse with all the true examples of grandeur. Their inventions are not only the food of our infancy, but the substance which supplies the fullest maturity of our vigour.

The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop,

or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.

When we have had continually before us the great works of Art to impregnate our minds with kindred ideas, we are then, and not till then, fit to produce something of the same species. We behold all about us with the eyes of those penetrating observers whose works we contemplate; and our minds, accustomed to think the thoughts of the noblest and brightest intellects, are prepared for the discovery and selection of all that is great and noble in nature. The greatest natural genius cannot subsist on its own stock: he who resolves never to ransack any mind but his own, will be soon reduced, from mere barrenness, to the poorest of all imitations; he will be obliged to imitate himself, and to repeat what he has before often repeated. When we know the subject designed by such men, it will never be difficult to guess what kind of work is to be produced.

It is vain for painters or poets to endeavour to invent without materials on which

the mind may work, and from which invention must originate. Nothing can come of nothing.

Homer is supposed to be possessed of all the learning of his time; and we are certain that Michael Angelo, and Raffaelle, were equally possessed of all the knowledge in the art which had been discovered in the works of their predecessors.

A mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern art, will be more elevated and fruitful in resources, in proportion to the number of ideas which have been carefully collected and thoroughly digested. There can be no doubt but that he who has the most materials has the greatest means of invention; and if he has not the power of using them, it must proceed from a feebleness of intellect; or from the confused manner in which those collections have been laid up in his mind.

The addition of other men's judgement is so far from weakening our own, as is the

opinion of many, that it will fashion and consolidate those ideas of excellence which lay in embryo, feeble, ill-shaped, and confused, but which are finished and put in order by the authority and practice of those, whose works may be said to have been consecrated by having stood the test of ages.

The mind, or genius, has been compared to a spark of fire, which is smothered by a heap of fuel, and prevented from blazing into a flame: This simile, which is made use of by the younger Pliny, may be easily mistaken for argument or proof. But there is no danger of the mind's being over-burthened with knowledge, or the genius extinguished by any addition of images; on the contrary, these acquisitions may as well, perhaps better, be compared, if comparisons signified any thing in reasoning, to the supply of living embers, which will contribute to strengthen the spark, that without the association of more fuel would have died away. The truth is, he whose feebleness is such, as to make other men's thoughts an incumbrance to him, can have no very great strength of

mind or genius of his own to be destroyed; so that not much harm will be done at worst.

We may oppose to Pliny the greater authority of Cicero, who is continually enforcing the necessity of this method of study. In his dialogue on Oratory, he makes Crassus say, that one of the first and most important precepts is, to choose a proper model for our imitation. *Hoc sit primum in præceptis meis, ut demonstremus quem imitemur.*

When I speak of the habitual imitation and continued study of masters, it is not to be understood, that I advise any endeavour to copy the exact peculiar colour and complexion of another man's mind; the success of such an attempt must always be like his, who imitates exactly the air, manner, and gestures, of him whom he admires. His model may be excellent, but the copy will be ridiculous: this ridicule does not arise from his having imitated, but from his not having chosen the right mode of imitation.

It is a necessary and warrantable pride to disdain to walk servilely behind any individual, however elevated his rank. The true and liberal ground of imitation is an open field; where, though he who precedes has had the advantage of starting before you, you may always propose to overtake him: it is enough however to pursue his course; you need not tread in his footsteps; and you certainly have a right to outstrip him if you can.

Nor whilst I recommend studying the art from artists, can I be supposed to mean, that nature is to be neglected: I take this study in aid, and not in exclusion, of the other. Nature is, and must be the fountain which alone is inexhaustible; and from which all excellencies must originally flow.

The great use of studying our predecessors is, to open the mind to shorten our labour, and to give us the result of the selection made by those great minds of what is grand or beautiful in nature; her rich stores are all spread out before us; but it is an art, and no

easy art to know how or what to choose, and how to attain and secure the object of our choice. Thus the highest beauty of form must be taken from nature; but it is an art of long deduction and great experience, to know how to find it. We must not content ourselves with merely admiring and relishing; we must enter into the principles on which the work is wrought: these do not swim on the superficies, and consequently are not open to superficial observers.

Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid, and works its effect, itself unseen. It is the proper study and labour of an artist to uncover and find out the latent cause of conspicuous beauties, and from thence form principles of his own conduct: such an examination is a continual exertion of the mind; as great, perhaps, as that of the artist whose works he is thus studying.

The sagacious imitator does not content himself with merely remarking what distinguishes the different manner or genius of

models for imitation, it requires no less circumspection to separate and distinguish what in those models we ought to imitate.

I cannot avoid mentioning here, though it is not my intention at present to enter into the art and method of study, an error which students are too apt to fall into. He that is forming himself, must look with great caution and wariness on those peculiarities, or prominent parts, which at first force themselves upon view; and are the marks, or what is commonly called the manner, by which that individual artist is distinguished.

Peculiar marks, I hold to be, generally, if not always, defects; however difficult it may be wholly to escape them.

Peculiarities in the works of art, are like those in the human figure: it is by them that we are cognizable and distinguished one from another, but they are always so many blemishes: which, however, both in real life and in painting, cease to appear deformities, to those who have them continually before

their eyes. In the works of art, even the most enlightened mind, when warmed by beauties of the highest kind, will by degrees find a repugnance within him to acknowledge any defects; nay, his enthusiasm will carry him so far, as to transform them into beauties, and objects of imitation.

It must be acknowledged, that a peculiarity of style, either from its novelty, or by seeming to proceed from a peculiar turn of mind, often escapes blame; on the contrary, it is sometimes striking and pleasing: but this it is a vain labour to endeavour to imitate; because novelty and peculiarity being its only merit, when it ceases to be new, it ceases to have value.

A manner therefore being a defect, and every painter, however excellent, having a manner, it seems to follow, that all kinds of faults, as well as beauties, may be learned under the sanction of the greatest authorities. Even the great name of Michael Angelo may be used, to keep in countenance a deficiency or rather neglect of colouring, and every

other ornamental part of the art. If the young student is dry and hard, Poussin is the same. If his work has a careless and unfinished air, he has most of the Venetian school to support him. If he makes no selection of objects, but takes individual nature just as he finds it, he is like Rembrandt. If he is incorrect in the proportions of his figures, Correggio was likewise incorrect. If his colours are not blended and united, Rubens was equally crude. In short, there is no defect that may not be excused, if it is a sufficient excuse that it can be imputed to considerable artists; but it must be remembered, that it was not by these defects they acquired their reputation; they have a right to our pardon, but not to our admiration.

However, to imitate peculiarities or mistake defects for beauties, that man will be most liable, who confines his imitation to one favourite master; and even though he chooses the best, and is capable of distinguishing the real excellencies of his model, it is not by such narrow practice, that a genius or

mastery in the art is acquired. A man is as little likely to form a true idea of the perfection of the art, by studying a single artist, as he would be to produce a perfectly beautiful figure, by an exact imitation of any individual living model. And as the painter, by bringing together in one piece, those beauties which are dispersed among a great variety of individuals, produces a figure more beautiful than can be found in nature, so that artist who can unite in himself the excellencies of the various great painters, will approach nearer to perfection than any one of his masters. He, who confines himself to the imitation of an individual, as he never proposes to surpass, so he is not likely to equal, the object of his imitation. He professes only to follow; and he that follows must necessarily be behind.

We should imitate the conduct of the great artists in the course of their studies, as well as the works which they produced, when they were perfectly formed. Raffaelle began by imitating implicitly the manner of Pietro Perugino, under whom he studied; hence

his first works are scarce to be distinguished from his master's; but soon forming higher and more extensive views, he imitated the grand outline of Michael Angelo; he learned the manner of using colours from the works of Leonardo da Vinci, and Fratre Bartolomeo: to all this he added the contemplation of all the remains of antiquity that were within his reach; and employed others to draw for him what was in Greece and distant places. And it is from his having taken so many models, that he became himself a model for all succeeding painters; always imitating, and always original.

If your ambition, therefore, be to equal Raffaelle, you must do as Raffaelle did, take many models, and not even *him* for your guide alone, to the exclusion of others *. And yet the number is infinite of those who seem, if one may judge by their style, to have seen no other works but those of their

* Sed non qui maxime imitandus, etiam solus imitandus est. Quintilian.

master, or of some favourite, whose *manner* is their first wish, and their last.

I will mention a few that occur to me of this narrow, confined, illiberal, unscientifick, and servile kind of imitators. Guido was thus meanly copied by Elizabetta Sirani, and Simone Cantarini; Poussin, by Verdier, and Cheron; Parmeggiano, by Jeronimo Mazzuoli. Paolo Veronese, and Iacomo Bassan, had for their imitators their brothers and sons. Pietro da Cortona was followed by Ciro Ferri, and Romanelli; Rubens, by Jacques Jordaens, and Diepenbeke; Guercino, by his own family, the Gennari. Carlo Maratti was imitated by Giuseppe Chiari, and Pietro de Pietri; and Rembrandt, by Bramer, Eeckhout, and Flink. All these, to whom may be added a much longer list of painters, whose works among the ignorant pass for those of their masters, are justly to be censured for barrenness and servility.

To oppose to this list a few that have adopted a more liberal style of imitation;—Pellegrino Tibaldi Rosso, and Primaticcio,

From the remains of the works of the antients the modern arts were revived, and it is by their means that they must be restored a second time. However it may mortify our vanity, we must be forced to allow them our masters; and we may venture to prophecy, that when they shall cease to be studied, arts will no longer flourish, and we shall again relapse into barbarism.

The fire of the artist's own genius operating upon these materials which have been thus diligently collected, will enable him to make new combinations, perhaps, superior to what had ever before been in the possession of the art: as in the mixture of the variety of metals, which are said to have been melted and run together at the burning of Corinth, a new and till then unknown metal was produced, equal in value to any of those that had contributed to its composition. And though a curious refiner should come with his crucibles, analyse and separate its various component parts, yet Corinthian brass would still hold its rank amongst the most beautiful and valuable of metals.

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The fire of the artist's own genius operating upon these materials which have been thus diligently collected, will enable him to make new combinations, perhaps, superior to what had ever before been in the possession of the art: as in the mixture of the variety of metals, which are said to have been melted and run together at the burning of Corinth, a new and till then unknown metal was produced, equal in value to any of those that had contributed to its composition. And though a curious refiner should come with his crucibles, analyse and separate its various component parts, yet Corinthian brass would still hold its rank amongst the most beautiful and valuable of metals.

We have hitherto considered the advantages of imitation as it tends to form the taste, and as a practice by which a spark of that genius may be caught, which illumines those noble works that ought always to be present to our thoughts.

We come now to speak of another *kind of* imitation; the borrowing a particular thought, an action, attitude, or figure, and transplanting it into your own work, this will either come under the charge of plagiarism, or be warrantable, and deserve commendation, according to the address with which it is performed. There is some difference likewise, whether it is upon the antients or moderns that these depredations are made. It is generally allowed, that no man need be ashamed of copying the antients: their works are considered as a magazine of common property, always open to the public, whence every man has a right to take what materials he pleases; and if he has the art of using them, they are supposed to become to all intents and purposes his own property. The collection of the thoughts of the antients

which Raffaelle made with so much trouble, is a proof of his opinion on this subject. Such collections may be made with much more ease, by means of an art scarce known in this time; I mean that of engraving; by which, at an easy rate, every man may now avail himself of the inventions of antiquity.

It must be acknowledged that the works of the moderns are more the property of their authors. He, who borrows an idea from an antient, or even from a modern artist not his contemporary, and so accommodates it to his own work, that it makes a part of it, with no seam or joining appearing, can hardly be charged with plagiarism: poets practise this kind of borrowing, without reserve. But an artist should not be contented with this only; he should enter into a competition with his original, and endeavour to improve what he is appropriating to his own work. Such imitation is so far from having any thing in it of the servility of plagiarism, that it is a perpetual exercise of the mind, a continual invention. Borrowing or stealing with such art and caution, will have a right

to the same lenity as was used by the Lacedemonians; who did not punish theft, but the want of artifice to conceal it.

In order to encourage you to imitation, to the utmost extent, let me add, that very finished artists in the inferior branches of the art, will contribute to furnish the mind and give hints, of which a skilful painter, who is sensible of what he wants, and is in no danger of being infected by the contact of vicious models, will know how to avail himself. He will pick up from dunghills what by a nice chymistry, passing through his own mind, shall be converted into pure gold; and under the rudeness of Gothic essays, he will find original, rational, and even sublime inventions.

The works of Albert Durer, Lucas Van Leyden, the numerous inventions of Tobias Stimmer, and Jost Ammon, afford a rich mass of genuine materials, which wrought up and polished to elegance, will add copiousness to what, perhaps, without

such aid, could have aspired only to justness and propriety.

In the luxuriant style of Paul Veronese, in the capricious compositions of Tintoret, he will find something, that will assist his invention, and give points, from which his own imagination shall rise and take flight, when the subject which he treats will with propriety admit of splendid effects.

In every school, whether Venetian, French, or Dutch, he will find either ingenious compositions, extraordinary effects, some peculiar expressions, or some mechanical excellence, well worthy of his attention, and, in some measure of his imitation. Even in the lower class of the French painters great beauties are often found, united with great defects. Though Coypel wanted a simplicity of taste, and mistook a presumptuous and assuming air for what is grand and majestick; yet he frequently has good sense and judgement in his manner of telling his stories, great skill in his compositions, and is not without a considerable power of expressing the pas-

sions. The modern affectation of grace in his works, as well as in those of Bosch and Watteau, may be said to be separated, by a very thin partition, from the more simple and pure grace of Correggio and Parmegiano.

Among the Dutch painters, the correct, firm, and determined pencil, which was employed by Bamboccio and Jean Miel, on vulgar and mean subjects, might without any change, be employed on the highest; to which, indeed, it seems more properly to belong. The greatest style, if that style is confined to small figures, such as Poussin generally painted, would receive an additional grace by the elegance and precision of pencil so admirable in the works of Teniers; and though the school to which he belonged, more particularly excelled in the mechanism of painting; yet it produced many, who have shown great abilities in expressing what must be ranked above mechanical excellencies. In the works of Frank Hals, the portrait-painter may observe the composition of a face, the features well

put together, as the painters express it; from whence proceeds that strong-marked character of individual nature, which is so remarkable in his portraits, and is not found in an equal degree in any other painter. If he had joined to this most difficult part of the art, a patience in finishing what he had so correctly planned, he might justly have claimed the place which Vandyck, all things considered, so justly holds as the first of portrait-painters.

Others of the same school have shown great power in expressing the character and passions of those vulgar people, which were the subjects of their study and attention. Among those Jan Steen seems to be one of the most diligent and accurate observers of what passed in those scenes which he frequented, and which were to him an academy. I can easily imagine, that if this extraordinary man had had the good fortune to have been born in Italy, instead of Holland, had he lived in Rome instead of Leyden, and been blessed with Michael Angelo and Raffaelle, for his masters, in-

stead of Brouwer and Van Goyen; the same sagacity and penetration which distinguished so accurately the different characters and expression in his vulgar figures, would, when exerted in the selection and imitation of what was great and elevated in nature, have been equally successful; and he now would have ranged with the great pillars and supporters of our Art.

Men who although thus bound down by the almost invincible powers of early habits, have still exerted extraordinary abilities within their narrow and confined circle; and have, from the natural vigour of their mind, given a very interesting expression and great force and energy to their works; though they cannot be recommended to be exactly imitated, may yet invite an artist to endeavour to transfer, by a kind of parody, their excellencies to his own performances. Whoever has acquired the power of making this use of the Flemish, Venetian, and French schools, is a real genius, and has sources of knowledge open to him which

were wanting to the great artists who lived in the great age of painting.

To find excellencies, however dispersed; to discover beauties, however concealed by the multitude of defects with which they are surrounded, can be the work only of him, who having a mind always alive to his art, has extended his views to all ages and to all schools; and has acquired from that comprehensive mass which he has thus gathered to himself, a well-digested and perfect idea of his art, to which every thing is referred. Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great, and what is little; brings home knowledge from the East and from the West; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with originality, and variety of inventions.

Thus I have ventured to give my opinion of what appears to me the true and only

method by which an artist makes himself master of his profession; which I hold ought to be one continued course of imitation, that is not to cease but with his life.

Those, who either from their own engagements and hurry of business, or from indolence, or from conceit and vanity, have neglected looking out of themselves, as far as my experience and observation reaches, have from that time, not only ceased to advance, and improve in their performances, but have gone backward. They may be compared to men who have lived upon their principal, till they are reduced to beggary, and left without resources.

I can recommend nothing better therefore, than that you endeavour to infuse into your works what you learn from the contemplation of the works of others. To recommend this has the appearance of needless and superfluous advice; but it has fallen within my own knowledge, that artists, though they were not wanting in a sincere love for their art [redacted] had

great pleasure in seeing good pictures, and were well skilled to distinguish what was excellent or defective in them, yet have gone on in their own manner, without any endeavour to give a little of those beauties, which they admired in others, to their own works. It is difficult to conceive how the present Italian painters, who live in the midst of the treasures of art, should be contented with their own style. They proceed in their common-place inventions, and never think it worth while to visit the works of those great artists with which they are surrounded.

I remember, several years ago, to have conversed at Rome with an artist of great fame throughout Europe; he was not without a considerable degree of abilities, but those abilities were by no means equal to his own opinion of them. From the reputation he had acquired, he too fondly concluded that he stood in the same rank when compared with his predecessors, as he held with regard to his miserable contemporary rivals. In conversation about particulars of the works of Raffaelle,

he seemed to have, or to affect to have, a very obscure memory of them. He told me that he had not set his foot in the Vatican for fifteen years together; that he had been in treaty to copy a capital picture of Raffaelle, but that the business had gone off; however, if the agreement had held, his copy would have greatly exceeded the original. The merit of this artist, however great we may suppose it, I am sure would have been far greater, and his presumption would have been far less, if he had visited the Vatican as in reason he ought to have done, at least once every month of his life.

I address myself, Gentlemen, to you who have made some progress in the art, and are to be, for the future, under the guidance of your own judgement and discretion. I consider you as arrived to that period, when you have a right to think for yourselves, and to presume that every man is fallible; to study the masters with a suspicion, that great men are not always exempt from great faults; to criticise, compare, and rank their works in your own estimation, as they approach to,

or recede from that standard of perfection which you have formed in your own minds, but which those masters themselves, it must be remembered, have taught you to make, and which you will cease to make with correctness, when you cease to study them. It is their excellencies which have taught you their defects.

I would wish you to forget where you are, and who it is that speaks to you, I only direct you to higher models and better advisers. We can teach you here but very little; you are henceforth to be your own teachers. Do this justice, however, to the English Academy; to bear in mind, that in this place you contracted no narrow habits, no false ideas, nothing that could lead you to the imitation of any living master, who may be the fashionable darling of the day. As you have not been taught to flatter us, do not learn to flatter yourselves. We have endeavoured to lead you to the admiration of nothing but what is truly admirable. If you choose inferior patterns, or if you make your own *former* works your patterns for your *latter*, it s your own fault.

The purport of this discourse, and, indeed, of most of my other discourses, is, to caution you against that false opinion, but too prevalent among artists, of the imaginary powers of native genius, and its sufficiency in great works. This opinion, according to the temper of mind it meets with, almost always produces, either a vain confidence, or a sluggish despair, both equally fatal to all proficiency.

Study, therefore the great works of the great masters, for ever. Study as nearly as you can, in the order, in the manner, and on the principles, on which they studied. Study nature attentively, but always with those masters in your company; consider them as models which you are to imitate, and at the same time as rivals with whom you are to contend.

DISCOURSE VII.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1776.

DISCOURSE VII.

THE REALITY OF A STANDARD OF TASTE, AS WELL AS OF CORPORAL BEAUTY. BESIDE THIS IMMUTABLE TRUTH, THERE ARE SECONDARY TRUTHS, WHICH ARE VARIABLE; BOTH REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE ARTIST, IN PROPORTION TO THEIR STABILITY OR THEIR INFLUENCE.

GENTLEMEN,

IT has been my uniform endeavour, since I first addressed you from this place, to impress you strongly with one ruling idea. I wished you to be persuaded, that success in your art depends almost entirely on your own industry; but the industry which I principally recommended, is not the industry of the *hands*, but of the *mind*.

As our art is not a divine *gift*, so neither
t a mechanical *trade*. Its foundations are
l science: and practice, though
ction, can never attain that to

which it aims, unless it works under the direction of principle.

Some writers upon art carry this point too far, and suppose that such a body of universal and profound learning is requisite, that the very enumeration of its kinds is enough to frighten a beginner. Vitruvius, after going through the many accomplishments of nature, and the many acquirements of learning, necessary to an architect, proceeds with great gravity to assert that he ought to be well skilled in the civil law; that he may not be cheated in the title of the ground he builds on. But without such exaggeration, we may go so far as to assert, that a painter stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his pallet, or collected by looking on his model, whether it be in life or in picture. He can never be a great artist, who is grossly illiterate.

Every man whose business is description, ought to be tolerably conversant with the poets, in some language or other; that he may imbibe a poetical spirit, and enlarge his

stock of ideas. He ought to acquire an habit of comparing and digesting his notions. He ought not to be wholly unacquainted with that part of philosophy which gives an insight into human nature, and relates to the manners, characters, passions, and affections. He ought to know *something* concerning the mind, as well as *a great deal* concerning the body of man. For this purpose, it is not necessary that he should go into such a compass of reading, as must, by distracting his attention, disqualify him for the practical part of his profession, and make him sink the performer in the critick. Reading, if it can be made the favourite recreation of his leisure hours, will improve and enlarge his mind, without retarding his actual industry. What such partial and desultory reading cannot afford, may be supplied by the conversation of learned and ingenious men which is the best of all substitutes for those who have not the means or opportunities of deep study. There are many such men in this age; and they will be pleased with communicating their ideas to artists, when they see them curious and docile, if they are treated with

ing, when his meaning is not well known to himself, with a certain degree of obscurity, as it is one source of the sublime. But when, in plain prose, we gravely talk of courting the Muse in shady bowers; waiting the call and inspiration of Genius, finding out where he inhabits, and where he is to be invoked with the greatest success; of attending to times and seasons when the imagination shoots with the greatest vigour, whether at the summer solstice or the vernal equinox; sagaciously observing how much the wild freedom and liberty of imagination is cramped by attention to established rules; and how this same imagination begins to grow dim in advanced age, smothered and deadened by too much judgement; when we talk such language, or entertain such sentiments as these, we generally rest contented with mere words; or at best entertain notions not only groundless but pernicious.

If all this means, what it is very possible was originally intended only to be meant, that in order to cultivate an art, a man secludes himself from the commerce of the

world, and retires into the country at particular seasons: or that at one time of the year his body is in better health, and consequently his mind fitter for the business of hard thinking than at another time; or that the mind may be fatigued and grow confused by long and unremitted application; this I can understand. I can likewise believe, that a man eminent when young for possessing poetical imagination, may, from having taken another road, so neglect its cultivation, as to show less of its powers in his latter life. But I am persuaded, that scarce a poet is to be found, from Homer down to Dryden, who preserved a sound mind in a sound body, and continued practising his profession to the very last, whose latter works are not as replete with the fire of imagination, as those which were produced in his more youthful days.

To understand literally these metaphors or ideas expressed in poetical language, seems to be equally absurd as to conclude, that because painters sometimes represent poets writing from the dictates of a little winged boy

or genius, that this same genius did really inform him in a whisper what he was to write; and that he is himself but a mere machine, unconscious of the operations of his own mind.

Opinions generally received and floating in the world, whether true or false, we naturally adopt and make our own; they may be considered as a kind of inheritance to which we succeed and are tenants for life, and which we leave to our posterity very nearly in the condition in which we received it; it not being much in any one man's power either to impair or improve it. The greatest part of these opinions, like current coin in its circulation, we are used to take without weighing or examining; but by this inevitable inattention many adulterated pieces are received, which, when we seriously estimate our wealth, we must throw away. So the collector of popular opinions, when he embodies his knowledge, and forms a system, must separate those which are true from those which are only plausible. But it becomes more peculiarly a duty to the professors of art not

to let any opinions relating to *that* art pass unexamined. The caution and circumspection required in such examination we shall presently have an opportunity of explaining.

Genius and taste, in their common acceptation appear to be very nearly related; the difference lies only in this, that genius has superadded to it a habit or power of execution: or we may say, that taste, when this power is added, changes its name, and is called genius. They both, in the popular opinion, pretend to an entire exemption from the restraint of rules. It is supposed that their powers are intuitive; that under the name of genius great works are produced and under the name of taste an exact judgement is given, without our knowing why, and without our being under the least obligation to reason, precept, or experience.

One can scarce state these opinions without exposing their absurdity; yet they are constantly in the mouths of men, and particularly of artists. They who have thought seriously on this subject, do not carry the

point so far; yet I am persuaded, that even among those few who may be called thinkers, the prevalent opinion allows less than it ought to the powers of reason; and considers the principles of taste, which give all their authority to the rules of art, as more fluctuating, and as having less solid foundations, than we shall find, upon examination, they really have.

The common saying, that *tastes are not to be disputed*, owes its influence, and its general reception, to the same error which leads us to imagine this faculty of too high an original to submit to the authority of an earthly tribunal. It likewise corresponds with the notions of those who consider it as a mere phantom of the imagination, so devoid of substance as to elude all criticism.

We often appear to differ in sentiments from each other, merely from the inaccuracy of terms, as we are not obliged to speak always with critical exactness. Something of this too may arise from want of words in the language in which we speak, to express the

more nice discriminations which a deep investigation discovers. A great deal however of this difference vanishes, when each opinion is tolerably explained and understood by constancy and precision in the use of terms.

We apply the term TASTE to that act of the mind by which we like or dislike, whatever be the subject. Our judgement upon an airy nothing, a fancy which has no foundation, is called by the same name which we give to our determination concerning those truths which refer to the most general and most unalterable principles of human nature; to the works which are only to be produced by the greatest efforts of the human understanding. However inconvenient this may be, we are obliged to take words as we find them; all we can do is to distinguish the THINGS to which they are applied.

We may let pass those things which are at once subjects of taste and sense, and which having as much certainty as the senses themselves, give no occasion to inquiry or dis-

pute. The natural appetite or taste of the human mind is for TRUTH; whether that truth results from the real agreement or equality of original ideas among themselves; from the agreement of the representation of any object with the thing represented; or from the correspondence of the several parts of any arrangement with each other. It is the very same taste which relishes a demonstration in geometry, that is pleased with the resemblance of a picture to an original, and touched with the harmony of musick.

All these have unalterable and fixed foundations in nature, and are therefore equally investigated by reason, and known by study; some with more, some with less clearness, but all exactly in the same way. A picture that is unlike, is false. Disproportionate ordonnance of parts is not right; because it cannot be true, until it ceases to be a contradiction to assert, that the parts have no relation to the whole. Colouring is true, when it is naturally adapted to the eye, from brightness, from softness, from harmony, from resemblance; because these agree with their

object, NATURE, and therefore are true; as true as mathematical demonstration; but known to be true only to those who study these things.

But beside real, there is also apparent truth, or opinion, or prejudice. With regard to real truth, when it is known, the taste which conforms to it, is, and must be, uniform. With regard to the second sort of truth, which may be called truth upon sufferance, or truth by courtesy, it is not fixed, but variable. However, whilst these opinions and prejudices, on which it is founded, continue, they operate as truth; and the art, whose office it is to please the mind, as well as instruct it, must direct itself according to opinion, or it will not attain its end.

In proportion as these prejudices are known to be generally diffused, or long received, the taste which conforms to them approaches nearer to certainty, and to a sort of resemblance to real science, even where opinions are found to be no better than prejudices. And since they deserve, on account of their

duration and extent, to be considered as really true, they become capable of no small degree of stability and determination, by their permanent and uniform nature.

As these prejudices become more narrow, more local, more transitory, this secondary taste becomes more and more fantastical; recedes from real science; is less to be approved by reason, aud less followed in practice; though in no case perhaps to be wholly neglected, where it does not stand, as it sometimes does, in direct defiance of the most respectable opinions received amongst mankind.

Having laid down these positions, I shall proceed with less method, because less will serve to explain and apply them.

We will take it for granted, that reason is something invariable and fixed in the nature of things; and without endeavouring to go back to an account of first principles, which for ever will elude our search, we will conclude, that whatever goes under the name of

taste, which we can fairly bring under the dominion of reason, must be considered as equally exempt from change. If therefore, in the course of this inquiry, we can show that there are rules for the conduct of the artist which are fixed and invariable, it follows of course, that the art of the connoisseur or, in other words, taste, has likewise invariable principles.

Of the judgement which we make on the works of art, and the preference that we give to one class of art over another, if a reason be demanded, the question is perhaps evaded by answering, I judge from my taste; but it does not follow that a better answer cannot be given, though, for common purposes, this may be sufficient. Every man is not obliged to investigate the cause of his approbation or dislike.

The arts would lie open for ever to caprice and casualty, if those who are to judge of their excellencies had no settled principles by which they are to regulate their decisions, and the merit or defect of performances were

to be determined by unguided fancy. And indeed we may venture to assert, that whatever speculative knowledge is necessary to the artist, is equally and indispensably necessary to the connoisseur.

The first idea that occurs in the consideration of what is fixed in art, or in taste, is that presiding principle of which I have so frequently spoken in former discourses,—the general idea of nature. The beginning, the middle, and the end of every thing that is valuable in taste, is comprised in the knowledge of what is truly nature; for whatever notions are not conformable to those of nature, or universal opinion, must be considered as more or less capricious.

My notion of nature comprehends not only the forms which nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabrick and organization, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination. The terms beauty, or nature, which are general ideas, are but different modes of expressing the same thing, whether we apply these terms to statues,

poetry, or pictures. Deformity is not nature, but an accidental deviation from her accustomed practice. This general idea therefore ought to be called Nature; and nothing else, correctly speaking, has a right to that name. But we are so far from speaking, in common conversation, with any such accuracy, that, on the contrary, when we criticise Rembrandt and other Dutch painters, who introduced into their historical pictures exact representations of individual objects with all their imperfections, we say,—though it is not in a good taste, yet it is nature.

This misapplication of terms must be very often perplexing to the young student. *Is not art, he may say, an imitation of nature?* Must he not therefore who imitates her with the greatest fidelity, be the best artist? By this mode of reasoning Rembrandt has a higher place than Raffaelle. But a very little reflection will serve to show us that these particularities cannot be nature: for how can that be the nature of man, in which no two individuals are the same?

It plainly appears, that as a work is conducted under the influence of general ideas, or partial, it is principally to be considered as the effect of a good or a bad taste.

As beauty therefore does not consist in taking what lies immediately before you, so neither, in our pursuit of taste, are those opinions which we first received and adopted, the best choice, or the most natural to the mind and imagination. In the infancy of our knowledge we seize with greediness the good that is within our reach; it is by after-consideration, and in consequence of discipline, that we refuse the present for a greater good at a distance. The nobility or elevation of all arts, like the excellency of virtue itself, consists in adopting this enlarged and comprehensive idea; and all criticism built upon the more confined view of what is natural, may properly be called *shallow* criticism, rather than false: its defect is, that the truth is not sufficiently extensive.

It has sometimes happened, that some of the greatest men in ot[illegible] have been betrayed

into errors by this confined mode of reasoning. Poussin, who, upon the whole, may be produced as an artist strictly attentive to the most enlarged and extensive ideas of nature, from not having settled principles on this point, has in one instance at least, I think, deserted truth for prejudice. He is said to have vindicated the conduct of Julio Romano for his inattention to the masses of light and shade, or grouping the figures in THE BATTLE OF CONSTANTINE, as if designedly neglected, the better to correspond with the hurry and confusion of a battle. Poussin's own conduct in many of his pictures, makes us more easily give credit to this report, That it was too much his own practice, THE SACRIFICE TO SILENUS, and THE TRIUMPH OF BACCHUS AND ARIADNE*, may be produced as instances; but this principle is still more apparent, and may be said to be even more ostentatiously displayed in his PERSEUS and MEDUSA'S HEAD †.

* In the Cabinet of the Earl of Ashburnham.

† In the Cabinet of Sir Peter Burrel.

This is undoubtedly a subject of great bustle and tumult, and that the first effect of the picture may correspond to the subject, every principle of composition is violated; there is no principal figure, no principal light, no groups; every thing is dispersed, and in such a state of confusion, that the eye finds no repose any where. In consequence of the forbidding appearance, I remember turning from it with disgust, and should not have looked a second time, if I had not been called back to a closer inspection. I then indeed found, what we may expect always to find in the works of Poussin, correct drawing, forcible expression, and just character; in short all the excellencies which so much distinguish the works of this learned painter.

This conduct of Poussin I hold to be entirely improper to imitate. A picture should please at first sight, and appear to invite the spectator's attention: if on the contrary the general effect offends the eye, a second view is not always sought, whatever more substantial and intrinsic merit it may possess.

Perhaps no apology ought to be received for offences committed against the vehicle (whether it be the organ of seeing, or of hearing,) by which our pleasures are conveyed to the mind. We must take care that the eye be not perplexed and distracted by a confusion of equal parts, or equal lights, or offended by an unharmonious mixture of colours, as we should guard against offending the ear by unharmonious sounds. We may venture to be more confident of the truth of this observation, since we find that Shakspeare, on a parallel occasion, has made Hamlet recommend to the players a precept of the same kind,—never to offend the ear by harsh sounds: *In the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of your passion*, says he, *you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.* And yet, at the same time, he very justly observes, *The end of playing, both at the first, and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirrour up to nature.* No one can deny, that violent passions will naturally emit harsh and disagreeable tones: yet this great poet and critick thought that this imitation of nature would cost too much, if purchased at the

expence of disagreeable sensations, or, as he expresses it, of *splitting the ear*. The poet and actor, as well as the painter of genius who is well acquainted with all the variety and sources of pleasure in the mind and imagination, has little regard or attention to common nature, or creeping after common sense. By overleaping those narrow bounds, he more effectually siezes the whole *mind*, and more powerfully accomplishes his purpose. This success is ignorantly imagined to proceed from inattention to all rules, and a defiance of reason and judgement: whereas it is in truth acting according to the best rules and the justest reason.

He who thinks nature, in the narrow sense of the word, is alone to be followed, will produce but a scanty entertainment for the imagination: every thing is to be done with which it is natural for the mind to be pleased, whether it proceeds from simplicity or variety, uniformity or irregularity; whether the scenes are familiar or exotick; rude and wild, or enriched and cultivated; for it is natural for the mind to be pleased with all these in their turn. In short, whatever pleases has in it what is

analogous to the mind, and is therefore, in the highest and best sense of the word, natural.

It is the sense of nature or truth, which ought more particularly to be cultivated by the professors of art: and it may be observed, that many wise and learned men, who have accustomed their minds to admit nothing for truth but what can be proved by mathematical demonstration, have seldom any relish for those arts which address themselves to the fancy, the rectitude and truth of which is known by another kind of proof: and we may add, that the acquisition of this knowledge requires as much circumspection and sagacity, as is necessary to attain those truths which are more capable of demonstration. Reason must ultimately determine our choice on every occasion; but this reason may still be exerted ineffectually by applying to taste principles which though right as far as they go, yet do not reach the object. No man, for instance, can deny, that it seems at first view very reasonable, that a statue which is to carry down to posterity the resemblance of an individual, should be dressed in the fashion

of the times, in the dress which he himself wore: this would certainly be true, if the dress were part of the man: but after a time, the dress is only an amusement for an antiquarian; and if it obstructs the general design of the piece, it is to be disregarded by the artist. Common sense must here give way to a higher sense. In the naked form, and in the disposition of the drapery, the difference between one artist and another is principally seen. But if he is compelled to exhibit the modern dress, the naked form is entirely hid, and the drapery is already disposed by the skill of the tailor. Were a Phidias to obey such absurd commands, he would please no more than an ordinary sculptor; since, in the inferior parts of every art, the learned and the ignorant are nearly upon a level.

These were probably among the reasons that induced the sculptor of that wonderful figure of Laocoon to exhibit him naked, notwithstanding he was surprised in the act of sacrificing to Apollo, and consequently ought to have been shown in his sacerdotal habits, if those greater [illegible] had not preponderated.

Art is not yet in so high estimation with us, as to obtain so great a sacrifice as the antients made, especially the Grecians; who suffered themselves to be represented naked, whether they were generals, law-givers, or kings.

Under this head of balancing and choosing the greater reason, or of two evils taking the least, we may consider the conduct of Rubens in the Luxembourg gallery, where he has mixed allegorical figures with the representations of real personages, which must be acknowledged to be a fault; yet, if the artist considered himself as engaged to furnish this gallery with a rich, various, and splendid ornament, this could not be done, at least in an equal degree, without peopling the air and water with these allegorical figures: he therefore accomplished all that he purposed. In this case all lesser considerations, which tend to obstruct the great end of the work, must yield and give way.

The variety which portraits and modern
s, mixed with allegorical figures, pro-
ot to be slightly given up upon a

punctilio of reason, when that reason deprives the art in a manner of its very existence. It must always be remembered that the business of a great painter, is to produce a great picture; he must therefore take special care not to be cajoled by specious arguments out of his materials.

What has been so often said to the *dis*-advantage of allegorical poetry,—that it is tedious, and uninteresting,—cannot *with* the same propriety be applied to painting, where the interest is of a different kind. If allegorical painting produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished; such a picture not only attracts, but fixes the attention.

If it be objected that Rubens judged ill at first in thinking it necessary to make his work so very ornamental, this puts the question upon new ground. It was his peculiar style; he could paint in no other;

and he was selected for that work, probably because it was his style. Nobody will dispute but some of the best of the Roman or Bolognian schools would have produced a more learned and more noble work.

This leads us to another important province of taste, that of weighing the value of the different classes of the art, and of estimating them accordingly.

All arts have means within them of applying themselves with success both to the intellectual and sensitive part of our natures. It cannot be disputed, supposing both these means put in practice with equal abilities, to which we ought to give the preference; to him who represents the heroick arts and more dignified passions of man, or to him who, by the help of meretricious ornaments, however elegant and graceful, captivates the sensuality, as it may be called, of our taste. Thus the Roman and Bolognian schools are reasonably preferred to the Venetian, Flemish or Dutch schools, as they address themselves to our best and noblest faculties.

Well-turned periods in eloquence, or harmony of numbers in poetry, which are in those arts what colouring is in painting, however highly we may esteem them, can never be considered as of equal importance with the art of unfolding truths that are useful to mankind, and which make us better or wiser. Nor can those works which remind us of the poverty and meanness of our nature, be considered as of equal rank with what excites ideas of grandeur, or raises and dignifies humanity; or, in the words of a late poet, which makes the beholder *learn to venerate himself as man**.

It is reason and good sense therefore, which ranks and estimates every art, and every part of that art, according to its importance, from the painter of animated, down to inanimated nature. We will not allow a man, who shall prefer the inferior style, to say it is his taste; taste here has nothing, or at least ought to have nothing, to do with the question. He wants not taste, but sense and soundness of judgement.

* Dr. Goldsmith.

Indeed perfection in an inferior style may be reasonably preferred to mediocrity in the highest walks of art. A landscape of Claude Lorrain may be preferred to a history of Luca Giordano, but never can prove the necessity of the connoisseur knowing in what consists the excellence of each class, in order to judge how near it approaches to perfection.

Even in works of the same kind, in a history-painting, which is composed of various parts, excellence of an inferior sort, carried to a very high degree, will make a work very valuable, and in some measure compensate for the absence of the higher kinds of merit. It is the part of the connoisseur to know and esteem, as much as it may deserve, every part of painting: he will not then think even Bassano unworthy of his notice; who, though totally devoid of expression, sense, grace, or elegance, may be esteemed on account of the harmony of his colours, which in his best works are little inferior to those of Titian.

Since I have mentioned Bassano, we must do him likewise the justice to acknowledge, that though he did not aspire to the dignity of expressing the characters and passions of men, yet, with respect to facility and truth in his manner of touching animals of all kinds, and giving them what painters call *their character*, few have excelled him.

To Bassano we may add Paul Veronese and Tintoret, for their entire inattention to what is justly thought the most essential part of our art, the expression of the passions. Notwithstanding these glaring deficiencies, we justly esteem their works; but it must be remembered, that they do not please from those defects, but from their great excellencies of another kind, and in spite of such transgressions. These excellencies too, as far as they go, are founded in the truth of *general* nature: they tell the *truth*, though not *the whole truth*.

By these considerations, which can never be too frequently impressed, may be obviated two errors, which I observed to have been,

formerly at least, the most prevalent, and to be most injurious to artists; that of thinking taste and genius to have nothing to do with reason, and that of taking particular living objects for nature.

I shall now say something on that part of *taste*, which, as I have hinted to you before, does not belong so much to the external form of things, but is addressed to the mind, and depends on its original frame, or to use the expression, the organization of the soul; I mean the imagination and the passions. The principles of these are as invariable as the former, and are to be known and reasoned upon in the same manner, by an appeal to common sense deciding upon the common feelings of mankind. This sense, and these feelings, appear to me of equal authority, and equally conclusive. Now this appeal implies a general uniformity and agreement in the minds of men. It would be else an idle and vain endeavour to establish rules of art; it would be pursuing a phantom, to attempt to move affections with which we were entirely unacquainted. We have no

reason to suspect there is a greater difference between our minds than between our forms; of which, though there are no two alike, yet there is a general similitude that goes through the whole race of mankind; and those who have cultivated their taste, can distinguish what is beautiful or deformed, or, in other words, what agrees with or deviates from the general idea of nature, in one case, as well as in the other.

The internal fabrick of our minds, as well as the external form of our bodies, being nearly uniform; it seems then to follow of course, that as the imagination is incapable of producing any thing originally of itself, and can only vary and combine those ideas with which it is furnished by means of the senses, there will be necessarily an agreement in the imaginations, as in the senses of men. There being this agreement, it follows, that in all cases, in our lightest amusements, as well as in our most serious actions and engagements of life, we must regulate our affections of every kind by that of others. The well-disciplined mind ac-

knowledges this authority, and submits its own opinion to the publick voice. It is from knowing what are the general feelings and passions of mankind, that we acquire a true idea of what imagination is; though it appears as if we had nothing to do but to consult our own particular sensations, and these were sufficient to ensure us from all error and mistake.

A knowledge of the disposition and character of the human mind can be acquired only by experience: a great deal will be learned, I admit, by a habit of examining what passes in our bosoms, what are our own motives of action, and of what kind of sentiments we are conscious on any occasion. We may suppose an uniformity, and conclude that the same effect will be produced by the same cause in the minds of others. This examination will contribute to suggest to us matters of inquiry; but we can never be sure that our own sentiments are true and right, till they are confirmed by more extensive observation. One man opposing another determines nothing; but a general union of

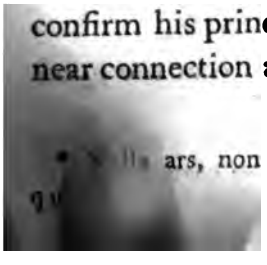
minds, like a general combination of the forces of all mankind, makes a strength that is irresistible. In fact, as he who does not know himself, does not know others, so it may be said with equal truth, that he who does not know others, knows himself but very imperfectly.

A man who thinks he is guarding himself against prejudices by resisting the authority of others, leaves open every avenue to singularity, vanity, self-conceit, obstinacy, and many other vices, all tending to warp the judgement, and prevent the natural operation of his faculties. This submission to others is a deference which we owe, and indeed are forced involuntarily to pay. In fact, we never are satisfied with our opinions, whatever we may pretend, till they are ratified and confirmed by the suffrages of the rest of mankind. We dispute and wrangle for ever; we endeavour to get men to come to us, when we do not go to them.

He therefore who is acquainted with the works which have pleased different ages and

different countries, and has formed his opinion on them, has more materials, and more means of knowing what is analogous to the mind of man, than he who is conversant only with the works of his own age or country. What has pleased, and continues to please, is likely to please again: hence are derived the rules of art, and on this immoveable foundation they must ever stand.

This search and study of the history of the mind ought not to be confined to one art only. It is by the analogy that one art bears to another, that many things are ascertained, which either were but faintly seen, or, perhaps, would not have been discovered at all, if the inventor had not received the first hints from the practices of a sister art on a similar occasion.* The frequent allusions which every man who treats of any art is obliged to make to others, in order to illustrate and confirm his principles, sufficiently show their near connection and inseparable relation.



* [illegible] ars, non alterius artis, aut mater, aut propin-qua.
TERTULL, as cited by JUNIUS.

All arts having the same general end, which is to please; and addressing themselves to the same faculties through the medium of the senses; it follows that their rules and principles must have as great affinity, as the different materials and the different organs or vehicles by which they pass to the mind, will permit them to retain.*

We may therefore conclude, that the real substance, as it may be called, of what goes under the name of taste, is fixed and established in the nature of things; that there are certain and regular causes by which the imagination and passions of men are affected; and that the knowledge of these causes is acquired by a laborious and diligent investigation of nature, and by the same slow progress as wisdom or knowledge of every kind, however instantaneous its operations may appear when thus acquired.

It has been often observed, that the good

* Omnes artes quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione inter se continentur. CICERO.

and virtuous man alone can acquire this true or just relish even of works of art. This opinion will not appear entirely without foundation, when we consider that the same habit of mind, which is acquired by our search after truth in the more serious duties of life, is only transferred to the pursuit of lighter amusements. The same disposition, the same desire to find something steady, substantial, and durable, on which the mind can lean as it were, and rest with safety, actuates us in both cases. The subject only is changed. We pursue the same method in our search after the idea of beauty and perfection in each; of virtue, by looking forwards beyond ourselves to society, and to the whole; of arts, by extending our views in the same manner to all ages and all times.

Every art, like our own, has in its composition fluctuating as well as fixed principles. It is an attentive inquiry into their difference that will enable us to determine how far we are influenced by custom and habit, and what is fixed in the nature of things.

To distinguish how much has solid foundation, we may have recourse to the same proof by which some hold that wit ought to be tried; whether it preserves itself when translated. That wit is false, which can subsist only in one language; and that picture which pleases only one age or one nation, owes its reception to some local or accidental association of ideas.

We may apply this to every custom and habit of life. Thus the general principles of urbanity, politeness, or civility, have been the same in all nations; but the mode in which they are dressed, is continually varying. The general idea of showing respect is by making yourself less; but the manner, whether by bowing the body, kneeling, prostration, pulling off the upper part of our dress, or taking away the lower*, is a matter of custom.

Thus, in regard to ornaments,—it would be unjust to conclude that because they were

* Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. EXODUS, iii. 5.

at first arbitrarily contrived, they are therefore undeserving of our attention; on the contrary, he who neglects the cultivation of those ornaments, acts contrary to nature and reason. As life would be imperfect without its highest ornaments, the Arts, so these arts themselves would be imperfect without *their* ornaments. Though we by no means ought to rank these with positive and substantial beauties, yet it must be allowed, that a knowledge of both is essentially requisite towards forming a complete, whole and perfect taste. It is in reality from the ornaments, that arts receive their peculiar character and complexion; we may add, that in them we find the characteristical mark of a national taste; as by throwing up a feather in the air, we know which way the wind blows, better than by a more heavy matter.

The striking distinction between the works of the Roman, Bolognian, and Venetian schools, consists more in that general effect which is produced by colours, than in the more profound excellencies of the art; at least it is from thence that each is distin-

guished and known at first sight. Thus it is the ornaments, rather than the proportions of architecture, which at the first glance distinguish the different orders from each other; the Dorick is known by its triglyphs, the Ionick by its volutes, and the Corinthian by its acanthus.

What distingushes oratory from a cold narration, is a more liberal, though chaste, use of those ornaments which go under the name of figurative and metaphorical expressions; and poetry distinguishes itself from oratory, by words and expressions still more ardent and glowing. What separates and distinguishes poetry, is more particularly the ornament of *verse:* it is this which gives it its character, and is an essential without which it cannot exist. Custom has appropriated different metre to different kinds of composition, in which the world is not perfectly agreed. In England the dispute is not yet settled, which is to be preferred, rhyme or blank verse. But however we disagree about what these metrical ornaments shall be, that

some metre is essentially necessary, is universally acknowledged.

In poetry or eloquence, to determine how far figurative or metaphorical language may proceed, and when it begins to be affectation or beside the truth, must be determined by taste; though this taste, we must never forget, is regulated and formed by the presiding feelings of mankind,—by those works which have approved themselves to all times and all persons. Thus, though eloquence has undoubtedly an essential and intrinsic excellence, and immoveable principles common to all languages, founded in the nature of our passions and affections; yet it has its ornaments and modes of address, which are merely arbitrary. What is approved in the eastern nations as grand and majestic, would be considered by the Greeks and Romans as turgid and inflated; and they, in return, would be thought by the Orientals to express themselves in a cold and insipid manner.

We may add likewise to the credit of ornaments, that it is by their means that Art

itself accomplishes its purpose. Fresnoy calls colouring, which is one of the chief ornaments of painting, *lena sororis*, that which procures lovers and admirers to the more valuable excellencies of the art.

It appears to be the same right turn of mind which enables a man to acquire the *truth*, or the just idea of what is right, in the ornaments, as in the more stable principles of art. It has still the same centre of perfection, though it is the centre of a smaller circle.

To illustrate this by the fashion of dress, in which there is allowed to be a good or bad taste. The component parts of dress are continually changing from great to little, from short to long; but the general form still remains: it is still the same general dress, which is comparatively fixed, though on a very slender foundation; but it is on this which fashion must rest. He who invents with the most success, or dresses in the best taste, would probably, from the same sagacity employed to greater purposes, have discovered equal skill, or have formed the

same correct taste, in the highest labours of art.

I have mentioned taste in dress, which is certainly one of the lowest subjects to which this word is applied; yet, as I have before observed, there is a right even here, however narrow its foundation respecting the fashion of any particular nation. But we have still more slender means of ascertaining, to which of the different customs of different ages or countries we ought to give the preference, since they seem to be all equally removed from nature. If an European, when he has cut off his beard, and put false hair on his head, or bound up his own natural hair in regular hard knots, as unlike nature as he can possibly make it; and after having rendered them immoveable by the help of the fat of hogs, has covered the whole with flour, laid on by a machine with the utmost regularity; if, when thus attired he issues forth, and meets a Cherokee Indian, who has bestowed as much time at his toilet, and laid on with equal care and attention his yellow and red oker on particular parts of his fore-

head or cheeks, as he judges most becoming: whoever of these two despises the other for this attention to the fashion of his country, which ever first feels himself provoked to laugh, is the barbarian.

All these fashions are very innocent; neither worth disquisition, nor any endeavour to alter them; as the charge would, in all probability, be equally distant from nature. The only circumstance against which indignation may reasonably be removed, is, where the operation is painful or destructive of health; such as some of the practices at Otaheite, and the straight lacing of the English ladies; of the last of which practices, how destructive it must be to health and long life, the professor of anatomy took an opportunity of proving a few days since in this Academy.

It is in dress, as in things of greater consequence. Fashions originate from those only who have the high and powerful advantages of rank, birth, and fortune. Many of the ornaments of art, those at least for which no

reason can be given, are transmitted to us, are adopted, and acquire their consequence from the company in which we have been used to see them. As Greece and Rome are the fountains from whence have flowed all kinds of excellence, to that veneration which they have a right to claim for the pleasure and knowledge which they have afforded us, we voluntarily add our approbation of every ornament and every custom that belonged to them, even to the fashion of their dress. For it may be observed that, not satisfied with them in their own place, we make no difficulty of dressing statues of modern heroes or senators in the fashion of the Roman armour or peaceful robe; we go so far as hardly to bear a statue in any other drapery.

The figures of the great men of those nations have come down to us in sculpture. In sculpture remain almost all the excellent specimens of ancient art. We have so far associated personal dignity to the persons thus represented, and the truth of art to their manner of representation, that it is not in

our power any longer to separate them. This is not so in painting; because having no excellent ancient portraits, that connexion was never formed. Indeed we could no more venture to paint a general officer in a Roman military habit, than we could make a statue in the present uniform. But since we have no ancient portraits,—to show how ready we are to adopt those kind of prejudices, we make the best authority among the moderns serve the same purpose. The great variety of excellent portraits with which Vandyck has enriched this nation, we are not content to admire for their real excellence, but extend our approbation even to the dress which happened to be the fashion of that age. We all very well remember how common it was a few years ago for portraits to be drawn in this fantastick dress; and this custom is not yet entirely laid aside. By this means it must be acknowledged very ordinary pictures acquired something of the air and effect of the works of Vandyck, and appeared therefore at first sight to be better pictures than they really were; they appeared so, however, to those only who had the means of making this

association; and when made, it was irresistible. But this association is nature, and refers to that secondary truth that comes from conformity to general prejudice and opinion; it is therefore not merely fantastical. Besides the prejudice which we have in favour of ancient dresses, there may be likewise other reasons for the effect which they produce; among which we may justly rank the simplicity of them, consisting of little more than one single piece of drapery, without those whimsical capricious forms by which all other dresses are embarrassed.

Thus, though it is from the prejudice we have in favour of the ancients, who have taught us architecture, that we have adopted likewise their ornaments; and though we are satisfied that neither nature nor reason are the foundation of those beauties which we imagine we see in that art, yet if any one, persuaded of this truth, should therefore invent new orders of equal beauty, which we will suppose to be possible, they would not please; nor ought he to complain, since the old has that great advantage of having custom

of ourselves. We are creatures of prejudice; we neither can nor ought to eradicate it; we must only regulate it by reason; which kind of regulation is indeed little more than obliging the lesser, the local and temporary prejudices, to give way to those which are more durable and lasting.

He therefore, who in his practice of portrait-painting wishes to dignify his subject, which we will suppose to be a lady, will not paint her in the modern dress, the familiarity of which alone is sufficient to destroy all dignity. He takes care that his work shall correspond to those ideas and that imagination which he knows will regulate the judgement of others; and therefore dresses his figure something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity, and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness. By this conduct his works correspond with those prejudices which we have in favour of what we continually see; and the relish of the antique simplicity corresponds with what we may call the more learned and scientific prejudice.

There was a statue made not long since of Voltaire, which the sculptor, not having that respect for the prejudices of mankind which he ought to have had, made entirely naked, and as meagre and emaciated as the original is said to be. The consequence was what might have been expected; it remained in the sculptor's shop, though it was intended as a publick ornament and a publick honour to Voltaire, for it was procured at the expence of his contemporary wits and admirers.

Whoever would reform a nation, supposing a bad taste to prevail in it, will not accomplish his purpose by going directly against the stream of their prejudices. Men's minds must be prepared to receive what is new to them. Reformation is a work of time. A national taste, however wrong it may be, cannot be totally changed at once; we must yield a little to the prepossession which has taken hold on the mind, and we may then bring people to adopt what would offend them, if endeavoured to be introduced by violence. When Battista

Franco was employed, in conjunction with Titian, Paul Veronese and Tintoret, to adorn the library of St. Mark. His work, Vasari says, gave less satisfaction than any of the others: the dry manner of the Roman school was very ill calculated to please eyes that had been accustomed to the luxuriancy, splendour, and richness of Venetian colouring. Had the Romans been the judges of this work, probably the determination would have been just contrary; for in the more noble parts of the art, Battista Franco was perhaps not inferior to any of his rivals.

GENTLEMEN,

It has been the main scope and principal end of this discourse to demonstrate the reality of a standard in taste, as well as in corporeal beauty; that a false or depraved taste is a thing as well known, as easily discovered, as any thing that is deformed, mis-shapen, or wrong, in our form or outward make; and that this knowledge is derived from the uniformity of sentiments among mankind, from whence

proceeds the knowledge of what are the general habits of nature; the result of which is an idea of perfect beauty.

If what has been advanced be true,—that beside this beauty or truth, which is formed on the uniform, eternal, and immutable laws of nature, and which of necessity can be but *one*; that beside this one immutable verity there are likewise what we have called apparent or secondary truths, proceeding from local and temporary prejudices, fancies, fashions or accidental connexion of ideas; if it appears that these last have still their foundation, however slender, in the original fabrick of our minds; it follows that all these truths or beauties deserve and require the attention of the artist, in proportion to their stability or duration, or as their influence is more or less extensive. And let me add, that as they ought not to pass their just bounds, so neither do they, in a well-regulated taste, at all prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, which alone to art its and permanent dign

To form this just taste is undoubtedly in your own power, but it is to reason and philosophy that you must have recourse; from them you must borrow the balance, by which is to be weighed and estimated the value of every pretension that intrudes itself on your notice.

The general objection which is made to the introduction of Philosophy into the regions of taste, is, that it checks and restrains the flights of the imagination, and gives that timidity, which an over-carefulness not to err or act contrary to reason is likely to produce. It is not so. Fear is neither reason nor philosophy. The true spirit of philosophy, by giving knowledge, gives a manly confidence, and substitutes rational firmness in the place of vain presumption. A man of real taste is always a man of judgement in other respects; and those inventions which either disdain or shrink from reason, are generally, I fear, more like the dreams of a distempered brain, than the exalted enthusiasm of a sound and true genius. In the midst of the highest

flights of fancy or imagination, reason ought to preside from first to last, though I admit her more powerful operation is upon reflection,

Let me add, that some of the greatest names of antiquity, and those who have most distinguished themselves in works of genius and imagination, were equally eminent for their critical skill. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace; and among the moderns, Boileau, Corneille, Pope, and Dryden, are at least instances of genius not being destroyed by attention or subjection to rules and science, I should hope therefore that the natural consequence of what has been said, would be, to excite in you a desire of knowing the principles and conduct of the great masters of our art, and respect and veneration for them when known.

DISCOURSE VIII.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES,

DECEMBER 10, 1778.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ART, WHETHER POETRY OR PAINTING, HAVE THEIR FOUNDATION IN THE MIND; SUCH AS NOVELTY VARIETY AND CONTRAST; THESE IN THEIR EXCESS BECOME DEFECTS. —SIMPLICITY. ITS EXCESS DISAGREEABLE.—RULES NOT TO BE ALWAYS OBSERVED IN THEIR LITERAL SENSE: SUFFICIENT TO PRESERVE THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRIZE PICTURES.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE recommended in former discourses,* that Artists should learn their profession by endeavouring to form an idea of perfection from the different excellencies which lie dispersed in the various schools of painting. Some difficulty will still occur, to know what is beauty, and where it may be found: one would wish not to be obliged to take it entirely on the credit of

* Discourse II. and VI.

fame; though to this, I acknowledge, the younger Students must unavoidably submit. Any suspicion in them of the chance of their being deceived, will have more tendency to obstruct their advancement, than even an enthusiastick confidence in the perfection of their models. But to the more advanced in the art, who wish to stand on more stable and firmer ground, and to establish principles on a stronger foundation than authority, however venerable or powerful, it may be safely told that there is still a higher tribunal, to which those great masters themselves must submit, and to which indeed every excellence in art must be ultimately referred. He who is ambitious to enlarge the boundaries of his art, must extend his views, beyond the precepts which are found in books or may be drawn from the practice of his predecessors, to a knowledge of those precepts in the mind, those operations of intellectual nature,—to which every thing that aspires to please, must be proportioned and accommodated.

Poetry having a more extensive power

than our art, exerts its influence over almost all the passions; among those may be reckoned one of our most prevalent dispositions, anxiety for the future. Poetry operates by raising our curiosity, engaging the mind by degrees to take an interest in the event, keeping that event suspended, and surprising at last with an unexpected catastrophe.

The Painter's art is more confined, and has nothing that corresponds with, or perhaps is equivalent to, this power and advantage of leading the mind on, till attention is totally engaged. What is done by Painting, must be done at one blow; curiosity has received at once all the satisfaction it can ever have. There are, however, other intellectual qualities and dispositions which the Painter can satisfy and affect as powerfully as the poet: among those we may reckon our love of novelty, variety and contrast; these qualities, on examination, will be found to refer to a certain activity and restlessness which has a pleasure and delight in being exercised and put in motion: Art

with pleasure but a small portion of novelty at a time. The main part of the work must be in the mode to which we have been used. An affection to old habits and customs I take to be the predominant disposition of the mind, and novelty comes as an exception: where all is novelty, the attention, the exercise of the mind is too violent. Contrast, in the same manner, when it exceeds certain limits, is as disagreeable as a violent and perpetual opposition; it gives to the senses, in their progress, a more sudden change than they can bear with pleasure.

It is then apparent, that those qualities, however they contribute to the perfection of Art, when kept within certain bounds, if they are carried to excess, become defects, and require correction: a work consequently will not proceed better and better as it is more varied; variety can never be the ground-work and principle of the performance—it must be only employed to recreate and relieve.

To apply these general observations which [illegible] equally to all arts, to ours in particu-

lar. In a composition, when the objects are scattered and divided into many equal parts, the eye is perplexed and fatigued, from not knowing where to rest, where to find the principal action, or which is the principal figure; for where all are making equal pretensions to notice, all are in equal danger of neglect.

The expression which is used very often on these occasions is, the piece wants repose; a word which perfectly expresses a relief of the mind from that state of hurry and anxiety which it suffers, when looking at a work of this character.

On the other hand, absolute unity, that is, a large work, consisting of one group or mass of light only, would be as defective as an heroick poem without episode, or any collateral incidents to recreate the mind with that variety which it always requires.

An instance occurs to me of two painters, (Rembrandt and Poussin,) of characters totally opposite to each other in every respect,

but in nothing more than in their mode of composition, and management of light and shadow. Rembrandt's manner is absolute unity; he often has but one group, and exhibits little more than one spot of light in the midst of a large quantity of shadow: if he has a second mass, that second bears no proportion to the principal. Poussin, on the contrary, has scarce any principal mass of light at all, and his figures are often too much dispersed, without sufficient attention to place them in groups.

The conduct of these two painters is entirely the reverse of what might be expected from their general style and character; the works of Poussin being as much distinguished for simplicity, as those of Rembrandt for combination. Even this conduct of Poussin might proceed from too great an affection to simplicity of *another kind*; too great a desire to avoid that ostentation of art, with regard to light and shadow, on which Rembrandt so much wished to draw the attention: however, each of them ran into contrary extremes, and it is difficult to determine which is the

most reprehensible, both being equally distant from the demands of nature, and the purposes of art.

The same just moderation must be observed in regard to ornaments; nothing will contribute more to destroy repose than profusion, of whatever kind, whether it consists in the multiplicity of objects, or the variety and brightness of colours. On the other hand, a work without ornament, instead of simplicity, to which it makes pretensions, has rather the appearance of poverty. The degree to which ornaments are admissible, must be regulated by the professed style of the work; but we may be sure of this truth,—that the most ornamental style requires repose to set off even its ornaments to advantage. I cannot avoid mentioning here an instance of repose, in that faithful and accurate painter of nature, Shakspeare; the short dialogue between Duncan and Banquo, whilst they are approaching the gates of Macbeth's castle. Their conversation very naturally turns upon the beauty of its situation, and the pleasantness of the air: and Banquo observing the

martlets' nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks, that where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind, after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horrour that immediately succeeds. It seems as if Shakspeare asked himself, What is a Prince likely to say to his attendants on such an occasion? The Modern writers seem, on the contrary, to be always searching for new thoughts, such as never could occur to men in the situation represented. This is also frequently the practice of Homer; who, from the midst of battles and horrours, relieves and refreshes the mind of the reader, by introducing some quiet rural image, or picture of familiar domestic life. The writers of every age and country, where taste has begun to decline, paint and adorn every object they touch; are always on the stretch; never deviate or sink a moment from the pompous and the brilliant. Lucan, Statius, and Claudian, (as a learned critick has observed,) are examples of this bad taste and want of

loftiness with the natural unaffected air of the portraits of Titian, where dignity, seeming to be natural and inherent, draws spontaneous reverence, and instead of being thus vainly assumed, has the appearance of an unalienable adjunct; whereas such pompous and laboured insolence of grandeur is so far from creating respect, that it betrays vulgarity and meanness, and new-acquired consequence.

The painters, many of them at least, have not been backward in adopting the notions contained in these precepts. The portraits of Rigaud are perfect examples of an implicit observance of these rules of Du Piles; so that though he was a painter of great merit in many respects, yet, that merit is entirely overpowered by a total absence of simplicity in every sense.

Not to multiply instances, which might be produced for this purpose, from the works of History-painters, I shall mention only one,—a picture which I have seen, of the Supreme Being by Coypell.

This subject the Roman Catholick painters have taken the liberty to represent; however indecent the attempt, and however obvious the impossibility of any approach to an adequate representation: but here the air and character, which the Painter has given, and he has doubtless given the highest he could conceive, are so degraded by an attempt at such dignity as De Piles has recommended, that we are enraged at the folly and presumption of the artist, and consider it as little less than profanation.

As we have passed to a neighbouring nation for instances of want of this quality, we must acknowledge, at the same time, that they have produced great examples of simplicity, in Poussin and Le Sueur. But as we are speaking of the most refined and subtle notion of perfection, may we not enquire, whether a curious eye cannot discern some faults, even in those great men? I can fancy, that even Poussin, by abhorring that affectation and that want of simplicity, which he observed in his countrymen, has, in certain particulars, fallen into the contrary extreme, so far

as to approach to a kind of affectation;—to what, in writing, would be called pedantry.

When Simplicity, instead of being a corrector, seems to set up for herself; that is, when an artist seems to value himself solely upon this quality; such an ostentatious display of simplicity becomes then as disagreeable and nauseous as any other kind of affectation. He is, however, in this case, likely enough to sit down contented with his own work; for though he finds the world look at it with indifference or dislike, as being destitute of every quality that can recreate or give pleasure to the mind, yet he consoles himself, that it has simplicity, a beauty of too pure and chaste a nature to be *relished* by vulgar minds.

It is in art as in morals; no character would inspire us with an enthusiastick admiration of his virtue, if that virtue consisted only in an absence of vice; something more is required; a man must do more than merely his duty, to be a hero.

Those works of the ancients, which are in the highest esteem, have something beside mere simplicity to recommend them. The Apollo, the Venus, the Laocoon, the Gladiator, have a certain Composition of Action, have contrasts sufficient to give grace and energy in a high degree; but it must be confessed of the many thousand antique statues which we have, that their general character is bordering at least on inanimate stupidity.

Simplicity, when so very uncommon as to seem to evade the difficulties of art, is a very suspicious virtue.

I do not, however, wish to degrade simplicity from the high estimation in which it has been ever justly held. It is our safest guard against that great enemy to truth and nature, Affectation, which is ever clinging to the pencil, and ready to drop in and poison every thing it touches.

Our love and affection to simplicity proceeds in a great measure from our natural

first essay of imitating nature, would make the whole mass of one colour, as the oldest painters did; till he is taught to observe not only the variety of tints, which are in the object itself, but the differences produced by the gradual decline of light to shadow: he then immediately puts his instruction in practice, and introduces a variety of distinct colours. He must then be again corrected and told, that though there is this variety, yet the effect of the whole upon the eye must have the union and simplicity of the colouring of nature.

And here we may observe, that the progress of an individual student bears a great resemblance to the progress and advancement of the Art itself. Want of simplicity would probably be one of the defects of an artist who had studied nature only as it was not of the old masters who lived in the time preceding the great æra of Painting; on the contrary, their works are too simple and too inanimate.

The Art in its infancy, like the first

It is not easy to give a rule which may serve to fix this just and correct medium; because when we may have fixed, or nearly fixed the middle point, taken as a general principle, circumstances may oblige us to depart from it, either on the side of Simplicity, or on that of Variety and Decoration.

I thought it necessary in a former discourse, speaking of the difference of the sublime and ornamental style of painting,—in order to excite your attention to the more manly, noble, and dignified manner, to leave perhaps an impression too contemptuous of those ornamental parts of our Art, for which many have valued themselves, and many works are much valued and esteemed.

I said then, what I thought it was right at that time to say; I supposed the disposition of young men more inclinable to splendid negligence, than perseverance in laborious application to acquire correctness; and therefor as we do in making what is crooke t, by b ; it the contrary

way, in order that it may remain straight at last.

For this purpose then, and to correct excess or neglect of any kind, we may here add, that it is not enough that a work be learned; it must be pleasing: the painter must add grace to strength, if he desires to secure the first impression in his favour. Our taste has a kind of sensuality about it, as well as a love of the sublime; both these qualities of the mind are to have their proper consequence, as far as they do not counteract each other; for that is the grand error which much care ought to be taken to avoid.

There are some rules, whose absolute authority, like that of our nurses, continues no longer than while we are in a state of childhood. One of the first rules, for instance, that I believe every master would give to a young pupil, respecting his conduct and management of light and shadow, would be what Lionardo da Vinci has actually given; that you must oppose a light ground

to the shadowed side of your figure, and a dark ground to the light side. If Lionardo had lived to see the superior splendour and effect which has been since produced by the exactly contrary conduct,——by joining light to light, and shadow to shadow,—— though without doubt he would have admired it, yet, as it ought not, so probably it would not be the first rule with which he would have begun his instructions.

Again; in the artificial management of the figures, it is directed that they shall contrast each other according to the rules generally given; that if one figure opposes his front to the spectator, the next figure is to have his back turned, and that the limbs of each individual figure be contrasted; that is, if the right leg be put forward, the right arm is to be drawn back.

It is very proper that those rules should be given in the Academy; it is proper the young students should be informed that some research is to be made, and that they should be habituated to consider every excellence as

reduceable to principles. Besides, it is the natural progress of instruction to teach first what is obvious and perceptible to the senses, and from hence proceed gradually to notions large, liberal, and complete, such as comprise the more refined and higher excellencies in Art. But when students are more advanced, they will find that the greatest beauties of character and expression are produced without contrast; nay more, that this contrast would ruin and destroy that natural energy of men engaged in real action, unsolicitous of grace. St. Paul preaching at Athens in one of the Cartoons, far from any affected academical contrast of limbs, stands equally on both legs, and both hands are in the same attitude: add contrast, *and the* whole energy and unaffected grace of the figure is destroyed. Elymas the sorcerer stretches both hands forward in the same direction, which gives perfectly the expression intended. Indeed you never will find in the works of Raffaelle any of those school-boy affected contrasts. Whatever contrast there is, appears without any seem-

ing agency of art, by the natural chance of things.

What has been said of the evil of excesses of all kinds, whether of simplicity, variety, of contrast, naturally suggests to the painter the necessity of a general inquiry into the true meaning and cause of rules, and how they operate on those faculties to which they are addressed: by knowing their general purpose and meaning, he will often find that he need not confine himself to the literal sense, it will be sufficient if he preserve the spirit of the law.

Critical remarks are not always understood without examples: it may not be improper therefore to give instances where the rule itself, though generally received, is false, or where a narrow conception of it may lead the artists into great errors.

It is given as a rule by Fresnoy, That *the principal figure of a subject must appear in the midst of the picture, under the principal light, to distinguish it from the rest.* A painter who

should think himself obliged strictly to follow this rule, would encumber himself with needless difficulties; he would be confined to great uniformity of composition, and be deprived of many beauties which are incompatible with its observance. The meaning of this rule extends, or ought to extend, no further than this;—That the principal figure should be immediately distinguished at the first glance of the eye; but there is no necessity that the principal light should fall on the principal figure, or that the principal figure should be in the middle of the picture. It is sufficient that it be distinguished by its place, or by the attention of other figures pointing it out to the spectator. So far is this rule from being indispensable, that it is very seldom practised, other considerations of greater consequence often standing in the way. Examples in opposition to this rule, are found in the Cartoons, in Christ's Charge to Peter, the Preaching of St. Paul, and Elymas the Sorcerer, who is undoubtedly the principal object in that picture. In none of those compositions is the principal figure in the midst of the picture. In the

admirable composition of the Tent of Darius, by Le Brun, Alexander is not in the middle of the picture, nor does the principal light fall on him; but the attention of all the other figures immediately distinguishes him, and distinguishes him more properly; the greatest light falls on the daughter of Darius, who is in the middle of the picture, where it is more necessary the principal light should be placed.

It is very extraordinary that Felibien, who has given a very minute description of this picture, but indeed such a description as may be rather called panegyrick than criticism, thinking it necessary (according to the precept of Fresnoy) that Alexander should possess the principal light, has accordingly given it to him; he might with equal truth have said that he was placed in the middle of the picture, as he seemed resolved to give this piece every kind of excellence which he conceived to be necessary to perfection. His generosity is

en ily misapplied, as it would have

a great measure, the beauty of

Another instance occurs to me, where equal liberty may be taken in regard to the management of light. Though the general practice is, to make a large mass about the middle of the picture surrounded by shadow, the reverse may be practised, and the spirit of the rule may still be preserved. Examples of this principle reversed may be found very frequently in the works of the Venetian School. In the great composition of *Paul* Veronese, THE MARRIAGE AT CANA, the figures are for the most part in half shadow; the great light is in the sky; and indeed the general effect of this picture, which is so striking, is no more than what we often see in landscapes, in small pictures of fairs and country feasts; but those principles of light and shadow, being transferred to a large scale, to a space containing near a hundred figures as large as life, and conducted to all appearance with as much facility, and with an attention as steadily fixed upon *the whole together*, as if it were a small picture immediately under the eye, the work justly excites our admiration; the difficulty being encreased as the extent is enlarged.

The various modes of composition are infinite; sometimes it shall consist of one large group in the middle of the picture, and the smaller groups on each side; or a plain space in the middle, and the groups of figures ranked round this vacuity.

Whether this principal broad light be in the middle space of ground, as in THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS; or in the sky, as in THE MARRIAGE AT CANA, in THE ANDROMEDA, and in most of the pictures of Paul Veronese; or whether the light be on the groups; whatever mode of composition is adopted, every variety and licence is allowable: this only is indisputably necessary, that to prevent the eye from being distracted and confused by a multiplicity of objects of equal magnitude, those objects, whether they consist of lights, shadows, or figures, must be disposed in large masses and groups properly varied and contrasted; that to a certain quantity of action a proportioned space of plain ground is required; that Light is to be supported by sufficient shadow; and, we may add, that a certain quantity of

cold colours is necessary to give value and lustre to the warm colours: what those proportions are cannot be so well learnt by precept as by observation on pictures, and in this knowledge bad pictures will instruct as well as good. Our inquiry why pictures have a bad effect, may be as advantageous as the inquiry why they have a good effect; each will corroborate the principles that are suggested by the other.

Though it is not my *business* to enter into the detail of our Art, yet I must take this opportunity of mentioning one of the means of producing that great effect which we observe in the works of the Venetian painters, as I think it is not generally known or observed. It ought, in my opinion, to be indispensably observed, that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm mellow colour, yellow, red, or a yellowish-white; and that the blue, the grey, or the green colours be kept almost entirely out of these masses, and be used only to support and set off these warm colours; and for this purpose,

a small proportion of cold colours will be sufficient.

Let this conduct be reserved; let the light be cold, and the surrounding colours warm, as we often see in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters, and it will be out of the power of art, even in the hands of Rubens or Titian, to make a picture splendid and harmonious.

Le Brun and Carlo Maratti were two painters of great merit, and particularly what may be called Academical Merit, but were both deficient in this management of colours: the want of observing this rule is one of the causes of that heaviness of effect which is so observable in their works. The principal light in the Picture of Le Brun, which I just now mentioned, falls on Statira, who is dressed very injudiciously in a pale blue drapery: it is true, he has heightened this blue with gold, but that is not enough, the whole picture has a heavy air, and by no means answers the expectation raised by the Print. Poussin often made a spot of blue

drapery, when the general hue of the picture was inclinable to brown or yellow; which shows sufficiently, that harmony of colouring was not a part of the art that had much engaged the attention of that great painter.

The conduct of Titian in the picture of BACCHUS AND ARIADNE, has been much celebrated, and justly, for the harmony of colouring. To Ariadne is given (say the criticks) a red scarf, to relieve the figure from the sea, which is behind her. It is not for that reason, alone, but for another of much greater consequence; for the sake of the general harmony and effect of the picture. The figure of Ariadne is separated from the great group, and is dressed in blue, which added to the colour of the sea, makes that quantity of cold colour which Titian thought necessary for the support and brilliancy of the great group; which group is composed, with very little exception, entirely of mellow colours. But as the picture in this case would be divided into two distinct parts, one half cold, and the other warm, it was necessary to carry some of the mellow colours of the

great group into the cold part of the picture, and a part of the cold into the great group; accordingly Titian gave Ariadne a red scarf, and to one of the Bacchante a little blue drapery.

The light of the picture, as I observed, ought to be of a warm colour; for though white may be used for the principal light, as was the practice of many of the Dutch and Flemish painters, yet it is better to suppose *that white* illumined by the yellow rays of the setting sun, as was the manner of Titian. The superiority of which manner is never more striking, than when in a collection of pictures we chance to see a portrait of Titian's hanging by the side of a Flemish picture, (even though that should be of the hand of Vandyck) which, however admirable in other respects, becomes cold and grey in the comparison.

The illuminated parts of objects are in nature of a warmer tint than those that are in the shade: what I have recommended therefore, is no more, than that the same

conduct be observed in the whole, which is acknowledged to be necessary in every individual part. It is presenting to the eye the same effect as that which it has been *accustomed* to feel, which in this case, as in every other, will always produce beauty; no principle therefore in our art can be more certain, or is derived from a higher source.

What I just now mentioned of the supposed reason why Ariadne has part of her drapery red, gives me occasion here to observe, that this favourite quality of giving objects relief, and which De Piles and all the Criticks have considered as a requisite of the utmost importance, was not one of those objects which much engaged the attention of Titian; painters of an inferior rank have far exceeded him in producing this effect. This was a great object of attention, when art was in its infant state; as it is at present with the vulgar and ignorant, who feel the highest satisfaction in seeing a figure, which, as they say, looks as if they could walk round it. But however low I may rate

this pleasure of deception, I should not oppose it, did it not oppose itself to a quality of a much higher kind, by counteracting entirely that fulness of manner which is so difficult to express in words, but which is found in perfection in the best works of Correggio, and we may add, of Rembrandt. This effect is produced by melting and losing the shadows in a ground still darker than those shadows; whereas that relief is produced by opposing and separating the ground from the figure either by light, or shadow, or colour. This conduct of in-laying, as it may be called, figures on their ground, in order to produce relief, was the practice of the old Painters, such as Andrea Mantegna, Pietro Perugino, and Albert Durer; and to these we may add, the first manner of Lionardo da Vinci, Giorgione, and even Correggio; but these three were among the first who began to correct themselves in dryness of style, by no longer considering relief as a principal object. As those two qualities, relief, and fulness of effect, can hardly exist together, it is not very difficult to determine to which we ought to give the preference.

An Artist is obliged for ever to hold a balance in his hand, by which he must determine the value of different qualities; that, when *some* fault must be committed, he may choose the least. Those painters who have best understood the art of producing a good effect, have adopted one principle that seems perfectly conformable to reason; that a part may be sacrificed for the good of the *whole*. Thus, whether the masses consist of light or shadow, it is necessary that they should be compact and of a pleasing shape: to this end, some parts may be made darker and some lighter, and reflexions stronger than nature would warrant. Paul Veronese took great liberties of this kind. It is said, that being once asked, why certain figures were painted *in* shade, as no cause was seen in the picture itself, he turned off the inquiry by answering, "*una nuevola che passa*," a cloud is passing which has overshadowed them.

But I cannot give a better instance of *this* practice than a picture which I have of Rubens; it is a representation of a Moonlight. Rubens has not only diffused more

light over the picture than is in nature, but has bestowed on it those warm glowing colours by which his works are so much distinguished. It is so unlike what any other painters have given us of Moon-light, that it might be easily mistaken, if he had not likewise added stars, for a fainter setting sun.—Rubens thought the eye ought to be satisfied in this case, above all other considerations: he might indeed have made it more natural, but it would have been at the expence of what he thought of much greater consequence,—the harmony proceeding from the contrast and variety of colours.

This same picture will furnish us with another instance, where we must depart from nature for a greater advantage. The Moon in this picture does not preserve so great a superiority in regard to its lightness over the object which it illumines, as it does in nature; this is likewise an intended deviation, and for the same reason. If Rubens had preserved the same scale of gradation of light between the Moon and the objects, which is found in nature, the picture must have con-

sisted of one small spot of light only, and at a little distance from the picture nothing but this spot would have been seen. It may be said indeed, that this being the case, it is a subject that ought not to be painted: but then, for the same reason, neither armour, nor any thing shining, ought ever to be painted; for though pure white is used in order to represent the greatest light of shining objects, it will not in the picture preserve the same superiority over flesh, as it has in nature, without keeping that flesh-colour of a very low tint. Rembrandt, who thought it of more consequence to paint light, than the objects that are seen by it, has done this in a picture of Achilles which I have. The head is kept down to a very low tint, in order to preserve this due gradation and distinction between the armour and the face; the consequence of which is, that upon the whole the picture is too black. Surely too much is sacrificed here to this narrow conception of nature: allowing the contrary conduct a fault, yet it must be acknowledged a less fault, than making a picture so dark that it cannot be seen without a peculiar light, and then with difficulty.

The merit or demerit of the different conduct of Rubens and Rembrandt in those instances which I have given, is not to be determined by the narrow principles of nature, separated from its effect on the human mind. Reason and common sense tell us, that before, and above all other considerations, it is necessary that the work should be seen, not only without difficulty or inconvenience, but with pleasure and satisfaction; and every obstacle which stands in the way of this pleasure and convenience must be removed.

The tendency of this Discourse, with the instances which have been given, is not so much to place the Artist above rules, as to teach him their reason; to prevent him from entertaining a narrow confined conception of Art; to clear his mind from a perplexed variety of rules and their exceptions, by directing his attention to an intimate acquaintance with the passions and affections of the mind, from which all rules arise, and to which they are all referable. Art effects its purpose by their means; an accurate knowledge, therefore, of those passions and disposi-

tions of the mind is necessary to him who desires to affect them upon sure and solid principles.

A complete essay or inquiry into the connection between the rules of Art, and the eternal and immutable dispositions of our passions, would be indeed going at once to the foundation of criticism *; but I am too well convinced what extensive knowledge, what subtle and penetrating judgement would be required, to engage in such an undertaking: it is enough for me, if, in the language of painters, I have produced a slight sketch of a part of this vast composition, but that sufficiently distinct to show the usefulness of such a theory, and its practicability.

Before I conclude, I cannot avoid making one observation on the pictures now before us. I have observed, that every candidate has copied the celebrated invention of Timanthes in hiding the face of Agamemnon in his

* This was inadvertently said. I did not recollect the admirable treatise *On the Sublime and Beautiful.*

mantle; indeed such lavish encomiums have been bestowed on this thought, and that too by men of the highest character in critical knowledge,—Cicero, Quintilian, Valerius, Maximus, and Pliny,—and have been since re-echoed by almost every modern that has written on the Arts, that your adopting it can neither be wondered at, nor blamed. It appears now to be so much connected with the subject, that the spectator would perhaps be disappointed in not finding united in the picture what he always united in his mind, and considered as indispensably belonging to the subject. But it may be observed, that those who praise this circumstance were not painters. They use it as an illustration only of their own art; it served their purpose, and it was certainly not their business to enter into the objections that lie against it in another Art. I fear *we* have but very scanty means of exciting those powers over the imagination which make so very considerable and refined a part of poetry. It is a doubt with me, whether we should even make the attempt. The chief, if not the only occasion which the painter has for this artifice, is, when the

subject is improper to be more fully represented, either for the sake of decency, or to avoid what would be disagreable to be seen: and this is not to raise or increase the passions, which is the reason that is given for this practice, but on the contrary to diminish their effect.

It is true, sketches, or such *drawings* as painters generally make for their works, give this pleasure of imagination to a high degree. From a slight, undetermined drawing, where the ideas of the composition and character are, as I may say, only just touched upon, the imagination supplies more than the painter himself, probably, could produce; and we accordingly often find that the finished work disappoints the expectation that was raised from the sketch; and this power of the imagination is one of the causes of the great pleasure we have in viewing a collection of drawings by great painters. These general ideas, which are expressed in sketches, correspond very well to the art often used in Poetry. A great part of the beauty of the celebrated description of Eve in Milton's

PARADISE LOST, consists in using only general indistinct expressions, every reader making out the detail according to his own particular imagination,—his own idea of beauty, grace, expression, dignity, or loveliness: but a painter, when he represents Eve on a canvass, is obliged to give a determined form, and his own idea of beauty distinctly expressed.

We cannot on this occasion, nor indeed on any other, recommend an undeterminate manner, or vague ideas of any kind, in a complete and finished picture. This notion therefore, of leaving any thing to the imagination, opposes a very fixed and indispensable rule in our art,—that every thing shall be carefully and distinctly expressed, as if the painter knew, with correctness and precision, the exact form and character of whatever is introduced into the picture. This is what with us is called Science, and Learning: which must not be sacrificed and given up for an uncertain and doubtful beauty, which, not naturally belonging to our Art, will probably be sought for without success.

Mr. Falconet has observed, in a note on this passage in his translation of Pliny, that the circumstance of covering the face of Agamemnon was probably not in consequence of any fine imagination of the painter,—which he considers as a discovery of the criticks,—but merely copied from the description of the sacrifice, as it is found in Euripides.

The words from which the picture is supposed to be taken, are these: *Agamemnon saw Iphigenia advance towards the fatal altar; he groaned, he turned aside his head, he shed tears, and covered his face with his robe.*

Falconet does not at all acquiesce in the praise that is bestowed on Timanthes; not only because it is not his invention, but because he thinks meanly of this trick of concealing, except in instances of blood, where the objects would be too horrible to be seen; but, says he, "in afflicted Father, in a King, in Agamemnon u, who are a painter, conceal from me t at in-

teresting circumstance, and then put me off with sophistry and a veil. You are (he adds) a feeble Painter, without resource: you do not know even those of your Art: I care not what veil it is, whether closed hands, arms raised, or any other action that conceals from me the countenance of the Hero. You think of veiling Agamemnon; you have unveiled your own ignorance. A Painter who represents Agamemnon veiled, is as ridiculous as a Poet would be, who in a pathetick situation, in order to satisfy my expectations, and rid himself of the business, should say, that the sentiments of his hero are so far above whatever can be said on the occasion, that he shall say nothing."

To what Falconet has said, we may add, that supposing this method of leaving the expression of grief to the imagination, to be, as it was thought to be, the invention of the painter, and that it deserves all the praise that has been given it, still it is a trick that will serve but once; whoever uses it a second time, will not only want to be justly suspected of using

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artifice to evade difficulties. If difficulties overcome make a great part of the merit of Art, difficulties evaded can deserve but little commendation.

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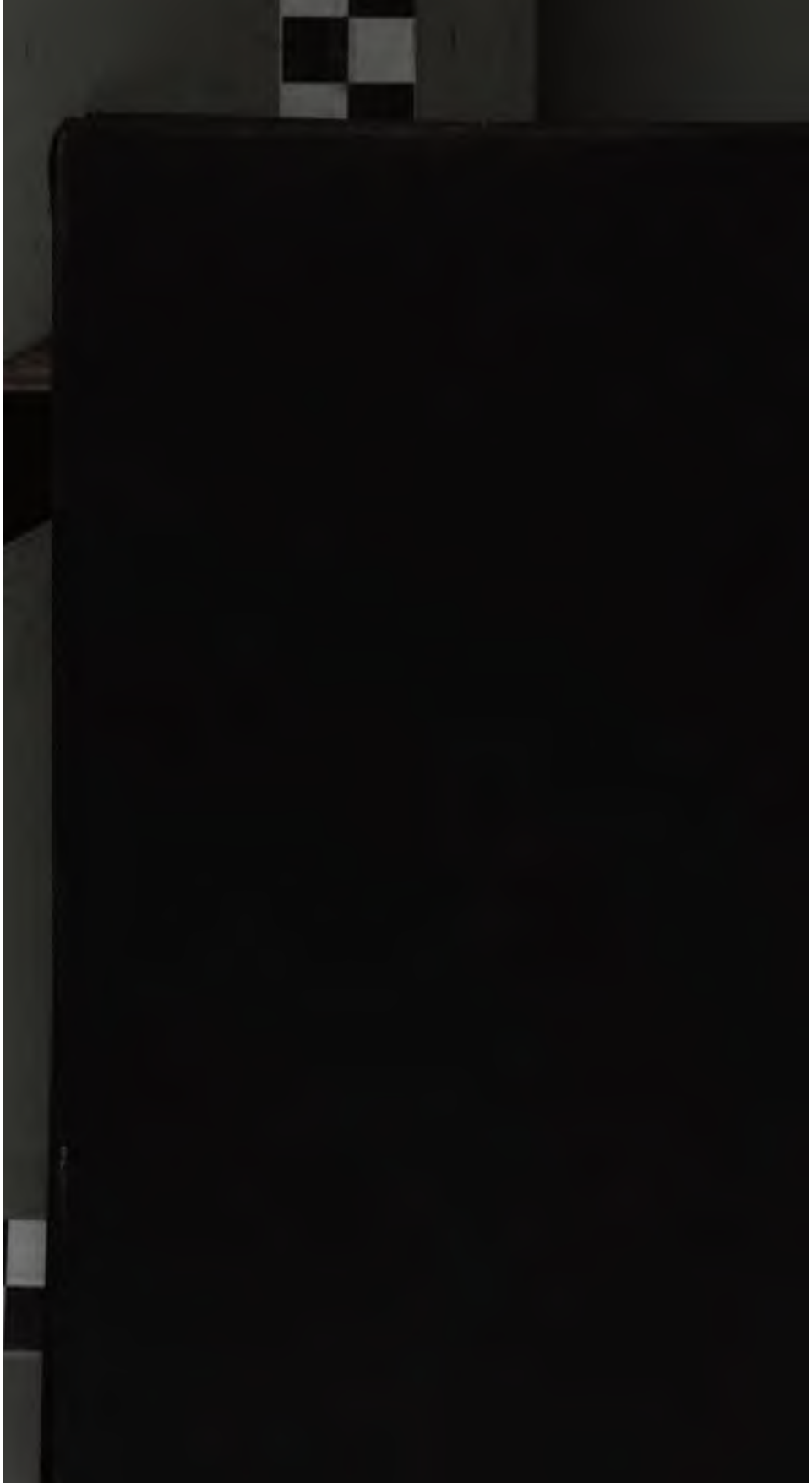
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